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DECEMBER 1999
NUMBER 98

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12
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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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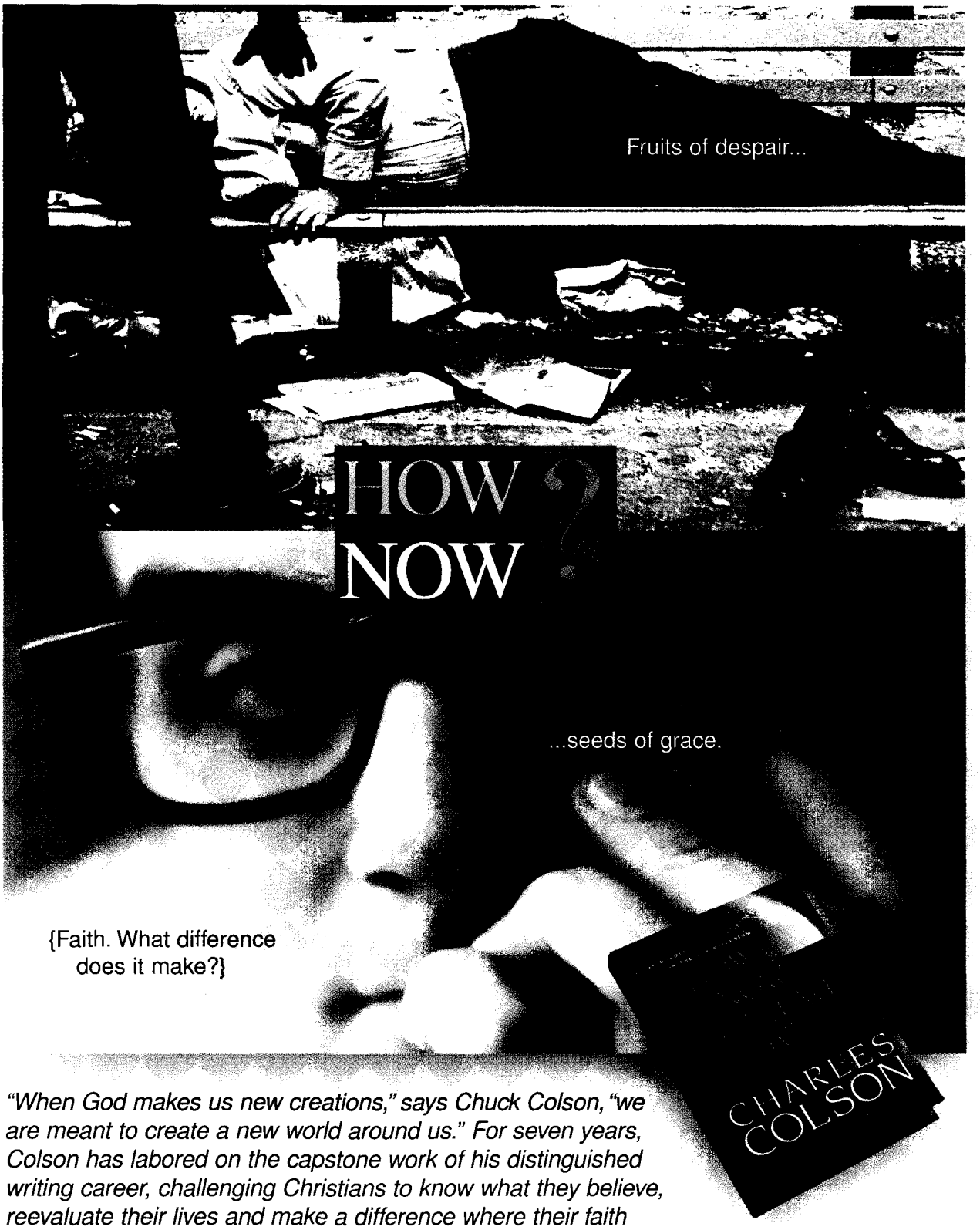

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DECEMBER 1999 • Number 98

CORRESPONDENCE 2 Moral progress; the Littleton massacre; natural law; contraception

THIS TIME 7 *James Nuechterlein* The Unheavenly Urban Philosopher

OPINION 9 *Sarah E. Hinlicky* Don't Write About Race

11 *Marie I. George* What Aquinas Really Said About Women

13 *Michael Linton* Moses at the Met

ARTICLES 17 *Edward T. Oakes* Shakespeare's Millennium

25 *Avery Dulles* Two Languages of Salvation: The Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration

31 *George Weigel* John Paul II and the Crisis of Humanism

REVIEW ESSAY 37 *Charlotte Allen* The Holy Feminine

BOOKS 45

J. Budziszewski Sanctify Them in the Truth by Stanley Hauerwas

Ted Dorman Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson

Robert P. George Government by Judiciary: The Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment by Raoul Berger

Daniel Pipes Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age by R. Stephen Humphreys

William D. Rubinstein A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939 by David Vital; . . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 68 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
Richard John Neuhaus
This Month: Liberalism Without a Left, Conservatism Without Delusions, *etc.*

Poetry by *J. Bottum* (6), *A. Jordan* (8), *David A. Gilder* (16), *Julie L. Anderson* (24), *Kathleen Morelock* (30), *Craig Payne* (36), *Marjorie Maddox* (44)

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Progress—Moral and Other

In an otherwise illuminating essay on "The Idea of Moral Progress" (August/September), Richard John Neuhaus errs when he says that "thirty million Americans who are today officially counted as living in 'poverty' have, with relatively few exceptions, a standard of living that was considered 'average' only twenty-five years ago." Would that it were so.

The poverty threshold, then as now, is defined by how much income it takes to purchase a minimally adequate diet. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Thrifty Food Plan provides the basis for determining that threshold. On the tested assumption that poor people cannot ordinarily afford to spend more than one-third of their income on food, the government multiplies the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan diet by three to arrive at the poverty line. Studies have shown that even the least poor of the poor can barely afford this economy diet, and many low-income people above the poverty line cannot do so. Poverty in the United States, by definition, describes those usually unable to feed themselves adequately without additional help. This was an average standard of living in 1974?

Last year the poverty line stood at $16,813 a year for a family of four. Living on that clearly entails hardship enough—but we are talking about almost thirty-six million people *below* the poverty threshold, 41 percent of them getting less than *half* the poverty-line income.

Additional help does reach most, though far from all, of these in the form of food stamps, Medicaid, and other programs. By including noncash government assistance the number of people below the poverty line in 1997 drops from thirty-six million to twenty-seven million. Many are also helped by a vast network of private emergency programs, including food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens. But as those agencies testify, these combined efforts fall far short of meeting the need. The Census Bureau has documented one result in the first-ever official study of hunger and food security in the United States. The bureau survey of forty-five thousand households showed that the number of Americans severely hungry (two million), moderately hungry (nine million), or food insecure (twenty-four million) is almost the same as the number living in poverty.

The U.S. economy in general does show progress, but the number of Americans still living in poverty and often hunger might indicate moral backsliding, because that number has increased by 50 percent, from twenty-four million in 1974, despite huge overall economic gains.

A better example of progress is world hunger. During the same period the number of chronically undernourished people dropped from one-third to one-fifth of the population in developing countries, and even declined slightly in absolute numbers despite population growth. That's dramatic progress and indicates that ending most hunger is not beyond human reach, God willing. And clearly God does so will.

Arthur Simon
President Emeritus
Bread for the World
Silver Spring, Maryland

In "The Idea of Moral Progress," Richard John Neuhaus fails to distinguish what society as a whole knows from what individual members of society know and do. It might be true, for example, that progress in some field such as theoretical physics has reached a standstill (although the same could not be said of many other rapidly ex-

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panding fields of knowledge), but most individuals in society grasp only a tiny fraction of what is known about theoretical physics. Thus there is enormous potential for an increase in knowledge of all individuals, even if the field as a whole is stagnant.

Similarly, moral progress is best reflected by the actions of individuals, rather than by whether society invents new moral laws. There were those at the time of Columbus who argued that it was wrong to oppress or enslave other races. Moral progress in this area came about not because of new ideas, but rather because existing ideas were embraced by more and more individuals, who then became a force for social and political change.

In my opinion as a practicing scientist, claims that we are near the "end of knowledge" are wildly premature. As Father Neuhaus points out, similar claims made in past centuries seem quite amusing to us today. Even Gunther Stents' relatively recent claims that molecular biology was stagnant can only seem absurd to us a few decades later as biologists are on the verge of mapping the complete genomes of several organisms (including humans), are developing cures for genetic diseases, and are routinely cloning mammals. Whether these developments are all for the good is a matter of debate, but there is no doubt that they represent a phenomenal increase in knowledge within the relatively few years since Stents' pessimistic assessment of the field. Fr. Neuhaus quotes the pessimists, but fails to give equal time to those who see the coming years as a golden age of science. (For a highly optimistic view, see E. O. Wilson's recent book *Consilience.*) In a similar fashion, repeated cries over the centuries of imminent moral collapse likely offer more insight into the mood of the authors than they do into the actual state of the times.

I will not venture an opinion on whether we are currently experiencing moral progress or decay, although my assessment of history is that humanity has made considerable moral progress over the long haul. In some sense it is moot, because the correct course for us in either case is, as Fr. Neuhaus suggests, to witness to the truth as best we are able.

Steven C. Pennings
University of Georgia Marine Institute
Sapelo Island, Georgia

RJN replies:
Arthur Simon is a friend and I am pleased to have worked with him in launching Bread for the World (BFW) many years ago. I finally resigned from the board in amicable disagreement over questions not unrelated to the subject of his letter. Exaggerated statements about poverty in the U.S. undermine the initial and important mission of BFW. Official poverty rates are estimated on the basis of reported annual household *income,* whereas material deprivation should be measured by patterns of *consumption.*

This is explained and elaborately documented by Nicholas Eberstadt in his 1995 study *The Tyranny of Numbers: Mismeasurement and Misrule.* The facts are that 40 percent of the officially poor in America own their own homes, 72 percent have washing machines, 60 percent own microwave ovens, 92 percent have color television sets, and 72 percent own one or more cars. Most of today's officially poor have a standard of living that twenty-five years ago was considered middle- or lower-middle class. Nor are food banks and similar programs an accurate measure, since supplying things free creates its own market which will be defined in terms of "need" by both suppliers and receivers.

Nor should we give credence to Census Bureau claims about hunger—whether severe, moderate, or merely "food insecure." How would the Census Bureau know? Reputable studies indicate that poor Americans are, in disproportion to the general population, overweight—mainly because they consume more (and less economical) junk food.

All that being said, there are of course hungry people, including hungry children, in the U.S. With relatively few exceptions, they are not hungry for economic reasons but for personal or behavioral reasons such as mental disability, alcoholism, drug addiction, and parental neglect. These people require attention and care, best provided by nongovernmental agencies. To the extent that BFW addresses such needs, rather than serving as a lobby for the further expansion of inflated and frequently counterproductive government welfare programs, it is to be warmly commended.

I thank Steven C. Pennings for his thoughtful amendments to my argument. Whether the likelihood is the end of science or a golden age, and how either relates to moral decline, are questions beyond any capacity or need to answer. We are agreed on what we are to do.

What Kind of Awakening?

In his otherwise thoughtful analysis of the aftermath of the Littleton, Colorado, shootings ("Awakening at Littleton," August/September), J. Bottum implies that the position Dr. Ed Dobson and I take in our book *Blinded By Might: Can The Religious Right Save America?* is defeatist and that we "offer a counsel of despair about the American soul." Far from it.

Our position is that believers should engage government. They just should not marry it. Our collective problems are primarily moral and spiritual, not economic and political. The latter can best be addressed by government. The former are the unique preserve of God's people, His Church.

We question the assumption that to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord is to accept the conservative Republican agenda. We also question whether sinners, redeemed though some may be, have the power to impose righteousness on the unrighteous. Has President Clinton "converted" many peo-

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ple to his way of thinking on issues with which they disagree?

Some believed that the day of deliverance had arrived when Republicans took control of Congress in 1994 for the first time in forty years. Newt Gingrich was hailed as a political savior. Yes, he kept the "Contract With America," but he voided a second marriage contract in favor of the company of yet another woman. How can politicians be trusted to impose morality on America when many can't impose it on themselves?

We have historic precedent for the corruption that comes, not to the state, but to the Church, when some try to execute a shotgun wedding between the temporal and eternal kingdoms. Recently, the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, said that campaign finance reform is a religious issue because "every human being is a person of dignity and worth as a child of God" and that "in our democracy a signal of that dignity and worth is a fair and just electoral process." The NCC, however, is prochoice on abortion and is generally viewed as a subsidiary of the Democratic Party. This is the direction in which conservative Christians are heading. Unless they pull up short, they risk becoming appendages of the Republican Party and compromising eternal truth in exchange for the illusion of political influence.

Those who bear the name of Christ must not confuse the two kingdoms. Believers can and should vote, run for office, even lobby legislators. But they should not place ultimate, or even primary, faith in government to reach and convert the human soul. That is a task reserved by God for Himself. The ordained should speak to cultural issues only where the Bible clearly speaks to them. They should avoid partisan politics because it demeans and diminishes the primary message they have been uniquely set apart to preach. Many of those who once preached against political involvement during the civil rights and anti-war eras now preach in favor of it, citing the same Bible, but different verses. Were they wrong then and right now, or the reverse?

When the Church appropriates the power that is unique to it—the power to transform a heart—it sees results. When it engages in spiritual alchemy—using the power of the state to advance the Kingdom of God—it substitutes a message that can transform for one that cannot. It also reduces God's messengers to the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" of lobbyists who petition government for attention. The threat is never to the state, but to the Church, which is compromised by those who have more interest in religious votes than in the Truth of the One they represent.

Cal Thomas
Los Angeles Times

The martyrdom of Cassie Bernall is indeed inspiring. For those convinced that the truth is worth dying for, her life is raised to the highest significance. J. Bottum rightly asserts that the image of this young lady offering her ultimate confession in the school library, with a gun to her head, is sufficiently potent to change hearts. We should hope and believe such change is possible.

But Mr. Bottum's follow-up suggestion, that a large-scale change is presently at work in the hearts of many Americans, is another matter. The difficulty in accepting Mr. Bottum's suggestion is in the examples he cites.

That Oprah Winfrey scrambled to schedule Cassie Bernall's parents on "her enormously popular television program" is no great cause to rejoice. For the trouble is not that truth receives no airtime, but that through the eyes of mass media the average viewer sees no qualitative distinctions in "news." It's either more *information* or merely *entertainment.* After all, everyone knows there are people who believe in God, just as there are people who believe in Martians and people who will follow madmen to Jones-

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town or the mountains. But is Cassie Bernall being presented as a sign of ultimate Truth or merely today's celebrity? The media are not choosy about whom they exploit.

In August, a rally was held at Columbine High School to "celebrate" the reopening of its doors. Many students were wearing identical T-shirts. A journalist described the event as "more MTV spring break than memorial service." One student was quoted: "I was so excited, I felt like I was on a sugar high." In an age of loneliness and hype, many are grasping for the newest "Real Right Thing" (as Walker Percy called it.) When strangers fly in from Florida, New York, and California (the three most transient states in the country) to attend Cassie Bernall's funeral, one trusts in the sincerity of their motives but questions whether their actions are not somewhat impulsive and extreme. True, they are grasping, and in this case, one hopes, for the right thing; but when the thrill wears off and a new sensation comes along, will the name of Cassie Bernall be shelved alongside Princess Diana and John F. Kennedy, Jr.?

As for politicians, one should retain a healthy skepticism. Our faithful President has consistently reminded us that public and heartfelt regret is a far cry from actual repentance.

Mr. Bottum concludes his article with Simone Weil's definitions of real good and real evil. No doubt Weil would envy Cassie Bernall's mode of departure from this world and see it as both an example of real good and proof that in the darkest moments there are sparks of hope. But in light of Weil's apprehension of the collective mentality, I suspect she'd look for signs of real transformation less in the media, rallies, and public confessions and more in sober-minded reactions to the presence of real evil. As Jacques Maritain once said, "Our epoch feels itself too far gone not to cry out to Heaven—but at times as a sick man cries for morphine, not for health. . . . Henceforth we shall expect the great danger of the age from a would-be religion and a would-be spirit."

Stephen Chamberlain
Newburyport, Massachusetts

What's Natural?

J. Budziszewski's review of *Homosexuality and American Public Life* (August/September) notes Gerard V. Bradley's view that homosexual marriage would mean "the demolition of marriage." That argument undermines the case for true natural law, which rests on a holistic reading of Scripture. Homophobia is based on a narrow reading of Scripture, one that has lost sight of the forest for a few trees.

As Edward T. Oakes notes in his penetrating essay "Pascal: The First Modern Christian" in the same issue, Pascal recognized "the essential animality of human nature, right through to the soul." To me, this truth warrants a special toleration of sexual peccadillos, because of sex's affinity with love, and because love atones (*kippur* in Hebrew) for a multitude of sins (Proverbs 10:12).

To appreciate the fallacy in the so-called "natural law" opposition to homosexual marriage, one need only consider the more serious threat posed by adultery, as defined by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Adultery encompasses not only looking in order to lust (Matthew 5:28; cf. Ecclesiastes 1:8: "the eye is never satisfied with seeing"), but also divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:32, 19:9). Divorce, unlike homosexual marriage, is a direct threat to heterosexual marriage. Yet nowhere to be seen is (pseudo) "natural law" opposition to serially monogamous adultery, or, for that matter, to divorce-and-remarriage to the same person (termed an "abomination" in Deuteronomy 25:4).

Mr. Budziszewski says not a word about hate crime. For him I suppose it's just too bad some haters may use his judgment against homosexuals as cover for their hatred, too bad it's so easy to scapegoat a minority group already deemed "bad," and too bad hatred and self-hatred feed on each other and some haters hate their own homosexual inclinations. For him, natural law is cut-and-dried, black-and-white, something we "can't not know"—black is black, white is white, and ne'er the twain shall meet.

Mark Peterson
Charlottesville, Virginia

J. Budziszewski replies:
Mark Peterson's first argument runs like this: Love atones; sex is like love; therefore sexual sin is self-atoning. If the paraphrase is not already sufficient to reveal the fallacy, consider that the love that atones is a commitment of the will to the true good of another. Sex that contravenes our bodily, emotional, and spiritual design cannot be ordered to the good.

The second argument is that no one can claim to be serious about marriage unless he opposes not only sodomy but also serial adultery. Right, and that's why I affirm the indissolubility of marriage; easy divorce is a prime example of how one bad thing leads to another, in this case the loss of the ability to make any distinctions about sexual acts at all. So what's the problem?

For his third argument, my correspondent holds that to say something is wrong with sodomy is to encourage the hatred of those who practice it. Please, Mr. Peterson, pay attention. What I hold is that sodomy is bad "for you," a path to death, a form of self-destruction. To speak hard truth is not to hate; it is to love my neighbor better than he loves himself. I beg you, do not seek death; seek life.

Making the Divide

In response to his critics on the issue of contraception (Correspondence, August/September), James Nuechterlein repeats the claim that Catholics are more divided on contraception than Protestants.

I would not deny the fact that many Catholic couples use contraception in

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spite of what the Church teaches. But I also recall what happened twelve years ago when I and three hundred mostly Protestant pro-lifers were arrested in Atlanta at the Democratic National Convention. Since there was not room for us in Atlanta's jails, they put us all together in makeshift dormitories on a farm outside the city. Thirty of those arrested were preachers and one was a priest. Every day we listened to several of the preachers, and magnificent preaching it was. Randall Terry, who organized the rescue that led to the arrests, spoke after the others and amazed me with his eloquence.

When the preachers had had their turns, they invited the priest to speak. First he told us few Catholics to pray for him because he was going to talk about something controversial—contraception. He proceeded to condemn it roundly, saying it was even worse than abortion.

Then a remarkable thing happened: Terry stood up and agreed with the priest. I can remember him saying, "We have been sold a bill of goods." Even more remarkably, at least half a dozen of the preachers followed with personal anecdotes illustrating their own anti-contraception convictions. Now I'm sure among those hundreds of Protestants there were many who approved of contraception, but none of them said a word.

Maybe Protestants are more divided on contraception than Catholics.

John Dunkle
Shillington, Pennsylvania

James Nuechterlein replies:
John Dunkle offers a striking anecdote, but, as I assume he would agree, anecdotes are not by themselves arguments. In any case, I am astonished that a Catholic priest would argue that contraception is worse than abortion. Surely that is not the teaching of the Church.

Correction

An essay in the October issue, "Angelism and the Provincial Self," referred to Richard Dawkins as a Nobel Prize laureate. He is not. He is the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. We apologize to our readers and to the Nobel Prize committee.

Lines Written on My Daughter Faith's Second Birthday

Why should the aspens shrink from death?
In the clearing after fire
they sift the sunlight through their leaves:
a ripple shield, a spray of shade
for tender shoots of tower pine
in whose grown shadow aspen dies.
Yesterday I caught my daughter
pushing gently at the mirror,
reaching for her self and other,
learning now that at the heart
of things there is divide. Christ,
it was from this I'd hoped to save her,
shelter her until I died
content beneath her tower shade.
In Faith's green age I climbed the hill
behind the cabin, through the pines,
to sit alone in the fire glade.
The aspens flashed like mirrored panes
and in the breeze the rippled leaves
whispered there of light and dark,
death and love and sacrifice,
the undivided heart that springs
to fill the broken heart of things.

J. Bottum

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This Time

The Unheavenly Urban Philosopher

James Nuechterlein

Most of us, in our effort to make sense of life, begin at home: we try, in the first instance, to make sense of our own lives. That attempt involves bringing order to what, in the living, has often seemed a disorderly process. The mental autobiographies we piece together do not work well if they are simply the recounting of one damn thing after another. The natural instinct is to retroactively impose on our experience a shape, coherence, and continuity that we did not sense at the time and that disinterested observers might treat skeptically. We see this clearly in others. We smile as the friend explains, "Well, yes, I was a Trotskyite then and I'm a Lefebvrist now, but if you look closely you'll see it's the continuities that matter."

My own political autobiography is free of Trotskyite/Lefebvrist disjunctures. (One advantage of a mind virtually free of imagination is an immunity to sectarian temptations.) But I was not always the perfect Tory I now am and sometimes imagine myself always to have been. I was never a person of the left, but as a young man I wavered between moderate liberalism and moderate conservatism. I was neither, I would say to others, *National Review* or *New Republic*. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society struck me as grandiose, but I regarded the Barry Goldwater crusade of 1964 as extremist (Ronald Reagan's speech in support of Goldwater scared me to death) and as late as 1968 I voted for Hubert Humphrey over Richard Nixon.

I mention all this as prelude. The newspapers reported the death, a few months ago, of Edward C. Banfield at age eighty-three, and in reading various obituaries and remembrances I was forcefully reminded that, although I never met Professor Banfield, he was a major influence in my life. I have read more important and more elegant books on public policy than his *The Unheavenly City* (1970), but I can think of none that made so much difference to me. He did not change my mind, but he did most powerfully clarify it. After I finished reading the book, there was no more wavering in my political self-definition. I was—and now without doubt or apology—a conservative. It's been all continuity from there on in.

I suspect that reading Banfield might not have affected me so strongly had I not been in Detroit during the terrifying black riot of 1967. That was a most unsettling experience, and I had been brooding on its meaning in the three years prior to the publication of *The Unheavenly City*. Banfield's analysis of America's urban crisis made sense to me not only of urban affairs in general but most particularly of the annual summer riots that had wracked the nation for half a decade after the first one in 1965 in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The Unheavenly City could not have gone more radically against the grain of the conventional wisdom on the causes and cures of the intertwined issues of race, poverty, and civil unrest. In the wake of the Detroit riot, the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) blamed the continuing outbursts on "white racism." Banfield did not, of course, deny the existence or malign influence of racial prejudice, but he insisted that the fundamental cause of black poverty was based more in class culture than in skin color. It was important to distinguish, he said, between the *historical* and the *continuing* causes of black disadvantage.

Banfield marshaled a vast array of evidence to show that for most blacks conditions of life had improved across the board. But there remained, especially in the central cities of the nation, a significant minority whom progress had passed by. The problems within the black underclass (as it later came to be called) relating to crime, unemployment, poverty, and education stemmed less, Banfield said, from external discrimination or indifference than from a dysfunctional way of life endemic among lower-class people everywhere.

He cited an earlier sociological study of *white* lower-class behavior—A. B. Hollingshead's *Elmtown's Youth* (1949)—to demonstrate his point. Banfield quoted Hollingshead at length to show that the behavior attributed ("more or less correctly") to lower-class whites—disrespect for law, disregard of the future, laziness, promiscuous sex, indifference to education—and the disapproval of that behavior by the larger society had obvious correlates with the current situation of the black underclass and of attitudes toward it. The culprit in the situation was culture, not race, and cultural patterns of behavior were notoriously resistant to change through public policy. Improvement was possible, Banfield

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argued—especially through general economic expansion—but it could only be incremental and would mostly have to come from inside the black community itself.

The response to *The Unheavenly City* by liberals was instant and unforgiving: Banfield was "blaming the victim." For those who were persuaded that the essential, even the sole, black problem was white prejudice—and that that prejudice was so pervasive and overwhelming in its effects as to leave poor blacks helpless to succeed in America so long as it persisted—reference to behavior patterns in the black community was but a diversion and an evasion. Racism was *the* problem, its elimination from the white psyche the only solution. In the meantime, amelioration would come for blacks only from "massive" government programs of aid and support that might to some degree circumvent the all-devouring prejudice that doomed reliance on private initiatives, white or black, to inevitable failure.

The liberal response could not have surprised Banfield. Indeed, he had anticipated it. Among the causes of urban discontent, he said, was precisely the altruistic bias of middle-class opinion leaders, seized by the urge to "do something, do good." But, Banfield insisted, we cannot solve fundamental social problems simply by exertions of social will. It was unfortunate, he thought, that the old urban political machines had been supplanted by liberal caucuses. The smoke-filled room had been superseded by the talk-filled room, and too much of that talk consisted of unappeasable righteous indignation. The "moral shrillness" of liberal opinion, caught up in fantasies of transformations in the "hearts and minds of men," had weakened the consensual bonds of society—had, indeed, invited the urban outbursts that liberals now used to assault the nation's conscience.

Banfield's conclusion was mordant: "Faith in the perfectibility of man and confidence that good intentions together with strenuous exertions will hasten his progress onward and upward lead to bold programs that promise to do what no one knows how to do and what perhaps cannot be done, and therefore end in frustration, loss of mutual respect and trust, anger, and even coercion."

As this passage indicates, Banfield's conservatism was rooted in a refusal of sentimentality and a resolute anti-utopianism. Having read him, I simply *knew* that he had urban policy right and the Kerner Commission had it wrong. He saw people and situations as they were, not as, were the world a different place than it is, they might be. Edward Banfield taught me (more precisely he reminded me) that the wisest social policy—and yes, the most compassionate—begins in an utter disdain for illusions. To do good we must be undeceived. FT

Immigrant Carol

This year for Christmas
Home comes to me,
Softly, late in the afternoon,
Drawn by the light of one small candle.
Tidings of joy in my children's faces
In this my strange country,
My Bethlehem.

A. Jordan

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Opinion

Don't Write About Race

Sarah E. Hinlicky

The cardinal rule of writing about race is: don't. There are several reasons why. First, it is impossible to say anything new. Second, it axiomatically follows that it is impossible to say anything interesting. Third, it is impossible to avoid offense; or, in laboring to avoid offense, whatever humble point that may have been trying to assert itself will be buried under piles of apologies, qualifications, and assurances of the goodwill of the author. Rather than submit oneself to such circuitous torture, the wise writer observes the rules and politely declines to write about race.

Anyone even marginally curious about the issue is forced to wonder how the American dialogue about race has ground to such a halt. Schools of thought on racial issues proliferate, yet they find no room for discussion, worse yet no *point* to discussion, among them. The unsurprising outcome of this refusal to discuss is that race is simply ignored, forgotten, and extracted from our collective American life altogether. Even the *New York Times* hardly ever mentions it except to demonize Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's police. Race relations no longer command public attention. In thirty short years we went from a national rally around a man with a dream to . . . nothing. In our eminently pragmatic America, lip service to equality in the dubious form of affirmative action has become the main focus of what little discussion remains.

By now I've already trespassed the cardinal rule against writing about race, so I have nothing to lose by writing a little more. Perhaps an examination of the social interactions between ordinary blacks and whites can shed some light on how we've reached this impasse. Acknowledging the impossibility of newness, I offer the following tale precisely for its sheer unremarkableness, the typical college experience common to nice young white Americans raised in monochrome neighborhoods.

I went to a small, private, liberal arts college in the South. The school's location didn't make it especially prone to racism, contrary to my expectations as a snooty Yankee. I can't recall any racial incidents on campus during my four-year tenure there. The white folks I knew were like me, conscientiously trying to be color-blind and sensitive to minority concerns. A couple were very outspoken about the imperative of racial justice. These, strangely, were the only ones I ever heard indulge in racial slurs. I suppose they considered themselves safe on account of their highly public convictions, as if their truthful claim to know "a lot of blacks" somehow made it okay to slam them. But even that was rare. Civil rights babies all, we knew the right side of history and were sticking to it.

Funny thing is, my racial enlightenment, and that of all my white friends, didn't make a smidgen of difference. Our school was segregated anyway. Not legally, but voluntarily, and enforced by social strictures more binding than anything government could impose. Take a look around the cafeteria, for instance. There's a sea of pink and peach faces, maybe one or two truly white from hangovers, all gathered around the front tables by the salad bar. Look farther back and at the other end of the room, by the cereal and the back door, all the brown and black faces together. It's embarrassing, like Rosa Parks on the bus, except the other way around: we don't care to sit in the front with you, thanks, we'll retreat to the back on our own. The rare breaches of the invisible wall between us happened only after baseball or football practices, when the players all sat together, an integration based on camaraderie and, I guess, sweat.

For ordinary whites, though, the wall remained insurmountable. I would imagine trying to strike up a conversation as, in my mind's eye, I meander towards the black students. I try to look completely natural. Instead, I look silly. My motivation to chat with these people, who to my eyes have only their color in common, can only be some peculiar manifestation of my white conscience. Maybe I am curious about "black culture," or maybe I feel it is my postmodern prerogative to engage the other purely on account of the other's otherness, or maybe I feel guilty that I always sit in the front and they always sit in the back. Silly. I also look scared. Who am I to presume on their territory? What do I have to say that could possibly interest them, when I don't even know what about them constitutes "them"? I am at a total loss as to what attitude won't be viewed with immediate suspicion. But that's just it. In fact, there is no correct attitude, because the situation itself is unnatural to the point of impossibility. Our segregation means that I am always a person of one color approaching a person of another color, with the

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absolute arbitrariness of color defining the whole interaction. It doesn't get any more unnatural than that. So I give in, my better (are they better?) intentions defeated, and I sit back down at my seat, up in the front.

It wasn't always, if I may say it, as black and white as that. I did know a few black students at college—a very few. The key thing was to find some common ground. Despite the language barrier, it was reasonably easy to meet the deaf black students within the large deaf community at my alma mater because their primary label was deaf, not black. Likewise in the theater we were thespians first, so the stage became neutral territory. I think of an astonishingly gifted young black man who starred in a number of our shows. He was widely adored for his talent, his humor, his style, his affectionate nature coupled with a breathtaking intensity, and, yes, his skin. I doubt he ever knew what a sheer relief it was for us to be with him, some living contact with a slice of enigmatically familiar America, the genuine article, of which we were normally deprived. He was like a little window through which we peeked at a hidden segment of our nation, normally revealed to us only by TV, and there superficially. At the same time and in a perverse way, our friendship with him was a safety net. He was our excuse to chime in with the ubiquitous "I *can't* be a racist—I have black friends." I wonder how many times white Americans have hauled out that phrase against the accusations coming not only from others, but from within themselves as well.

Another neutral territory encounter took place in the Writing Center, where I worked under the gentle title of "peer consultant." One afternoon a black freshman in English 131 came in for some advice on the documentation of his research paper. His explanation of the topic, black fraternities, distracted me entirely from the matter at hand. Honestly, I was horrified. He told me with evident satisfaction about the brutal initiation rites and absolute allegiance to the group required to become a brother. One practice involved blindfolding the pledges, driving them to and depositing them in a small town several hundred miles away, stripping them of jackets, money, and phone cards, and then expecting them to make it home safely. "It's to teach us," he said, "about not being allowed to travel in public, about having to hide out from the Klan. It teaches us strength, endurance, self-reliance." "It's not like that anymore," I commented. "It's our heritage," he replied. "We are brothers. We must be linked together by a common bond." The common bond, I realized with a chill, is a history of abuse from people of my color.

Then he added that, as far as he knew, most black fraternities were in legal trouble for hazing, which he took to be a sign of further white oppression of the black brotherhood. Who needs white oppression, I thought, when you so effectively oppress your own? Perhaps this young man also thought it oppression that most of the white students on campus were opposed to the introduction of black fraternities. The reason was simple: the group pressure would prevent any black student from ever again joining a "white" fraternity and the inevitable segregation would deepen, institutionalized all over again.

What all this means is that we—by which I mean America's newest grown-ups of European descent—were raised by a system that did and didn't work. It did work because the very idea of judging someone on the basis of skin color is, I would assert, anathema to the vast majority of white twenty- and thirty-somethings in this country. It didn't work because, despite our equitable attitude towards blacks, our convictions have languished in the abstract. We have simply remained apart. Albeit nonviolently (an important qualification), color still divides us.

Or is it really color? I wonder. I've detected little hints that it isn't color at all. There's a girl I knew, for instance, who became black. I thought it was a stretch for this blonde-haired, blue-eyed young woman, but she pulled it off with what seemed remarkable ease. The first sign of her transformation was that she started to date only black men, strongly encouraging me to do the same. (I thought it made no more sense to date a man solely because he was black than it did to refuse to date a man solely because he was black.) Then it was her music—suddenly all she listened to was rap, hip-hop, R&B, and sometimes a little soul. Her slang vocabulary evolved, followed by a subtly altered accent, and soon she had become our local expert on all things African American. She, the white-skinned, accepted them, the black-skinned, and they accepted her too without any apparent trouble, and along the way she also accepted a new identity—a black one, despite her skin color. I thought it odd—not objectionable, just odd—but then again, I guess she never had much of an identity at all as one among many of the great whitewashed masses. Now she does.

Another little hint is the racial assortment of the church I attended for a while. Some of the members had black skin. Almost none of those, however, were African Americans, but rather Africans who have become Americans recently. In other words, immigrants, not the descendants of slaves. It's not that the latter wouldn't have been welcome in our church—quite the contrary—but they rarely came. The immigrants, though, are just like any other immigrants

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melting into American society, and their color was not a point of much interest.

No, I think it's culture. Color's role now is to demarcate conveniently the change in culture, and it happens to make the cultural segregation all the more obvious. Think about it: no one is terribly concerned about whether or not the Koreans or the Peruvians are mingling adequately with whites. Of course they are, because that's the culture they're joining, that of the immigrants who believed that new and better opportunities awaited them. My forebears, for instance, came here in freedom, or at least some kind of it. Whether they were plagued by poverty or persecution, war or imminent war, they set sail for America in full confidence that freedom awaited them on the other side of the Atlantic, in exotic-sounding places like . . . Nebraska. And once here, they could shed their pasts, their accents, and their cooking in one swift generation's time, blending into the free American masses with only a surname, at most, to betray their roots.

Not so with our black brethren who were brought to these shores in chains. America was not a courageous choice. Beautiful freedom was not a guarantee. It was something withheld, bequeathed, squelched, earned, desired, demanded, but never just plain assumed. To this day, regardless of fair treatment or mistreatment, the heavy history of enslavement hangs over black Americans, like Toni Morrison's Beloved who haunts the barely free Sethe. They can't help but collectively embody a reproach to the American dream, whether they want to or not. The cultural identity created by that status can't be shrugged off lightly, like my great-grandmother's recipe for sauerkraut. For those bearing the black color, participation in broad, i.e., "white," American culture must remain an ambiguous option. And white Americans in turn can't help but recall that the origin of a different black culture is past injustice by whites. Maybe not by any one of us particularly or by our forebears either, but regardless of what we think about those past perpetrators of injustice, we still share their skin color.

Black America and white America are different cultures, and these cultures still distrust one another. Moving across color lines means also moving across culture lines. It's easy enough to learn to be color-blind. Is it possible to become culture-blind? Maybe there's an answer to be found, but I think I'd better quit now, since I'm not supposed to be writing about race in the first place.

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What Aquinas Really Said About Women

Marie I. George

In several passages in the *Summa Theologiae* and elsewhere, Thomas Aquinas asserts that the inferiority of women lies not just in bodily strength but in force of intellect. To top this off, he maintains that feminine intellectual inferiority actually contributes to the order and beauty of the universe. But he also affirms that in Heaven there are and will be women who occupy higher places than men. What can we make of this apparent inconsistency? Is he simply hedging on his seemingly chauvinistic positions to accommodate Mary, Queen of Heaven? Or do his views on women make sense only as part of his comprehensive view of the universe?

To begin to understand his position, we must ask why Aquinas thinks women intellectually inferior in the first place. Scripture is likely his first guide. St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:10 that "man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman was created for the sake of man." This passage echoes Genesis 2:18,19: "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will give him a helpmate." Aquinas reasons from these scriptural passages that when one thing exists for the sake of another, it is inferior to that other. Other passages indicate more clearly that the intelligence is the seat of woman's divinely ordained inferiority. When in 1 Corinthians 11:3 St. Paul says that "man is the head of woman," and in Ephesians 5:22 that "a husband is the head of his wife," Aquinas takes it as evident that if men are meant to rule, it can only be by virtue of intellectual superiority.

Aquinas' views on female inferiority were doubtless influenced as well by Aristotle's reproductive biology, with its understanding of the relation between male and female as one of active (perfect) principle to passive (imperfect) principle. Aristotle saw the sperm as the formative agent; the mother simply supplied raw material to be incorporated into the developing child. He also thought the sperm was directed to producing only male offspring, and that when this did not result it was because something interfered with the active principle within the sperm.

Finally, however, Aquinas does not believe it matters very much whether the particular causes involved in reproduction are to be regarded as fail-

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ing or not failing when women are engendered. God desires that women be part of the universe, and He orders nature in such a way as to insure that they are produced. (On the question of Aquinas' biology, see Michael Nolan, "What Aquinas Never Said About Women," FT, November 1998.)

In addition to the testimony of Scripture and biology, Aquinas probably took female intellectual inferiority to be plain enough from experience. He points out, for example, that shysters prey on widows in preference to men because "men are wiser and more discerning, and not so quickly taken in." He encourages widows to turn to prayer in their desolation, lest woman's "softness of soul" lead them to pamper themselves, an occasion of serious sin. He also notes the difficulty women have in sticking to their decisions, and how quickly they can change their minds out of desire, anger, or fear.

Aquinas does not mean, however, that all women or only women are prone to these vices; he acknowledges that there are women outstanding in self-control and men who lack it. He also points out that being less intelligent, and thus less educable, can sometimes prove advantageous from a moral and spiritual point of view. Devoutness is frequently found more often in women and simple, uneducated men because their lack of learning makes it easier for them to trust in God wholeheartedly, rather than in themselves.

But we cannot fairly address the question of woman's intelligence without considering Aquinas' general views on the perfection of the universe and on woman's place in it. Following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that "perfection" can mean two different things: first, that a being has all the parts and powers it ought to have; and second, that its parts and powers are greater than those of another being. A plant that has all the attributes and abilities it ought to have (e.g., to grow, to reproduce) is a perfect plant, but compared to a dog, which not only grows and reproduces but also sees and moves about, it is a less perfect being. In the same way, the general intellectual inferiority of women does not make them defective or inferior simply speaking, but only in the particular natural order, in comparison to most males and to beings with a more perfect nature—namely, the angels.

Far from denigrating women because of their intellectual imperfection, Aquinas sees it—and all imperfection—as an instance of divine wisdom:

> God, through His providence, orders all things to divine goodness as to an end; not however in such a manner that His goodness increases through those things which come to be, but so that a likeness of His goodness is imprinted in things insofar as it is possible, for indeed it is necessary that every created substance fall short of divine goodness, so that in order for divine goodness to be communicated to things more perfectly, it was necessary for there to be diversity in things, so that what is not able to be perfectly represented by some one [thing] is represented in a more perfect manner through diverse things in diverse ways. (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 97)

Those who fail to see the goodness of relative imperfection often do so because they focus on the *parts* of the universe and overlook that it is the universe *as a whole* that best reflects God. Aquinas argues that without imperfection there would be no diversity, and without diversity the universe would not represent God in the best possible way. Arthur Lovejoy misses the mark in *The Great Chain of Being* when he criticizes Aquinas as saying that it would be better to have a work of pulp fiction and a copy of Virgil than two copies of Virgil. Aquinas would respond that God does create things that are less perfect than others, but not things that are lacking in those qualities or virtues they ought to have. Everything that God makes is good. Diversity does not imply defect or sin on the part of anyone; on the contrary, the relative imperfections of things are desired by God: "The cause of this disparity could be from the part of God, certainly not that He was punishing certain individuals and rewarding others; but that He would raise some up more, and others less, so that the beauty of order would more shine forth in humankind."

When it comes to perfection in the sense of attaining one's ultimate end, beatitude, superiorities in the natural order are no longer the determining factor. The rank of a rational creature in the order of glory is determined by God's love for that individual, a love that is dictated not by the natural perfection of the individual but by God's good pleasure. The better rational creature is better primarily because God loves it more, but secondarily because the creature, in free response to God's love, loves God in return more than others do.

Just as some human beings will surpass certain angels in glory despite the inferiority of human nature to angelic nature, so too some women will achieve greater glory than some men despite their inferiority as to intelligence.

> In the first state of mankind the body was subject to the soul and nothing could happen in the body which would be contrary to

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> the good of the soul, neither as to its being nor as to its operation; nor is this precluded by the fact that even then there was a diverse dignity of souls according to the diversity of bodies, since it is necessary for the soul to be proportioned to the body, as form to matter, and as mover to moved: and therefore woman, even as to her soul, was more imperfect than man. In the ultimate state, however, such is the subjection [of body to soul] that the quality of body follows the virtue of the mind; whence according to the diversity of merits one soul will be more worthy than another soul, and the body more glorious; whence there will not be a difference on account of diverse sex. (*Scriptum super Sententiis*, II, 21, question 2, article 2)

The Blessed Virgin Mary is of course for Aquinas the most unambiguous example of a woman who excels in glory not only all men but all angels, not by virtue of her nature, but on account of grace. The women who stood at the foot of the cross and those who went to Christ's tomb on Easter morning are also likely to occupy higher ranks in Heaven than most men. Aquinas does not hesitate to commend these women for their outstanding love and devotion.

Regardless of whether we agree with Aquinas' position on woman's intelligence, there is at least one important thing we can learn from him about relative inferiorities—we should love our own. God wants inequalities in rational beings, and if we love God we should conform our will to His. It is pride, the excessive desire of our own excellence, that tends to make us sad when another has some perfection or grace we do not have. To sorrow at the good is intrinsically evil. In our discussions of the differences between the sexes, we must avoid yielding to impulses of envy, but strive rather to love whatever littleness we may have due to our sex, as God loves it.

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Moses at the Met

Michael Linton

The twentieth century an age of religious art? It wouldn't seem so. In the ranks of painters, sculptors, writers, and architects it is hard to think of very many (Rouault, Gaudi, Solzhenitsyn) for whom matters of faith were a significant subject for their creativity. But as this aggressively secular century closes, it's somewhat surprising to realize that most of the period's composers were deeply concerned with religious issues and that their greatest works were often overtly religious compositions: Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, Bernstein's *Mass*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Messiaen's *St. Francis*, Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion*, and the list goes on. God may have been dead for the guys with brushes and pens, but either the news hadn't reached the musicians or they discounted the reports as premature.

This centrality of religious issues to modern composers was dramatically highlighted last spring by the Metropolitan Opera's production of Arnold Schoenberg's rarely performed *Moses und Aron*. Although he did not live to hear a performance (it was first staged in Zurich in 1957, six years after his death), Schoenberg regarded the opera as his most important composition. James Levine, the Met's artistic director, had long prodded the Met to produce it. But the difficulty of the opera, the notoriously conservative tastes of the Met's board and audience, and a preemptive 1990 production by the New York City Opera all conspired to delay the performance. Better late than never. Levine's tenacity was rewarded when the production not only received critical praises but strong houses and a chance to return for the 1999-2000 season.

Certainly the bravos are well deserved. It's hard to think of an opera that requires more of its chorus, and the Met singers proved themselves to be among the most accomplished anywhere. John Tomlinson as Moses and Philip Langridge as Aaron performed their very different roles convincingly, and Levine led his orchestra through Schoenberg's gnarled polyphony with alacrity. Yet even in these performers' hands, the deep flaws of the opera could be neither concealed nor overcome. For despite Schoenberg's efforts and intentions, the work is a dramatic, musical, and theological failure that testifies to the difficulties of creating religious art outside a religious community.

The problems begin with Schoenberg's libretto, which is not so much about the beginning of the Exodus as it is a Heideggerian ramble on the nature of God. For Schoenberg, "God" is pure idea who can be experienced only internally. Act One begins at the burning bush. God instructs Moses to free the Israelites from their Egyptian masters, telling him that his brother Aaron will assist him by putting

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Moses' lofty pronouncements into a vocabulary the Hebrews can understand. The people are initially suspicious, but after Aaron performs several wonders (Moses' leprous hand is healed, his staff is changed to a serpent, Nile water runs as blood), they accept Aaron's promise that the one God will strengthen them against Pharaoh and his many gods. Act One concludes with the Israelites pledging their allegiance to the new God.

Act Two opens in the wilderness, the Hebrews growing restless as they wait for Moses to return from meeting with God. They suspect that the new deity has killed Moses and abandoned them. They become violent, and Aaron agrees to give the mob an image of God they can comprehend. He makes the golden calf (a stuffed disemboweled ox in the Met production). The people bring it offerings and sacrifices. They become drunk, murderous, and orgiastic.

As their orgy collapses into stupor, Moses returns with the stone tables of the law. Outraged by what he sees, he commands that the idol be destroyed and calls Aaron to account. Aaron justifies himself by describing the people's fears and telling Moses that he "heeded the voice from within" when he gave the people an image of God they could comprehend. Moses may love his pure idea of God, but Aaron claims that he loves the people. God may be timeless, but such timelessness is shown by the endurance of Israel, and Israel proves its faithfulness by its "feeling." Nothing truly encompasses the totality of God, Aaron argues, and the stone tablets no less than the golden calf are but a partial revelation—and thus a distortion—of the pure God-idea so important to Moses.

Recognizing the validity of Aaron's point, Moses smashes the tablets in disgust. Chiding Moses, Aaron says that by making Moses' idea comprehensible to the common man, he sustains it. A pillar of fire appears to lead the Israelites, but Moses distrusts it as yet another physical distortion of the metaphysical truth. Aaron joins the people as they begin to follow the pillar, while Moses remains rooted in despair. Aaron has perverted Moses' pure perception of God, and the act closes with Moses crying hopelessly, "Oh word, word that I lack!"

The third act is a debate between Moses and his brother. Moses has arrested Aaron, who stands accused of encouraging false hopes (such as a notion of a "Promised Land"). Aaron contends that Moses' idea of God would remain meaningless to the people unless presented in imagery they can understand. The two men argue, and although Moses orders his brother released, Aaron falls dead and the opera ends.

The revelation to Moses of THE NAME, the Passover, the stubbornness of Pharaoh, the Israelites' liberation from the forced servitude of Pharaoh into the voluntary servitude of the Lord: none of these play any part in Schoenberg's libretto. Moses, not the hand of God, frees the Hebrews (although God gives him the idea). Aaron convinces the Hebrews of God's power through tricks, while Moses is a prattling professor; and the God of the Exodus—who saves His people by parting the waters of the Red Sea and feeds them with manna—Schoenberg replaces with a philosophical concept, the God of the Really Big But Hard To Understand Idea.

Schoenberg's metaphysical Big Idea has its musical twin: serialism. He began work on the opera in 1930 (he was born in 1874) and had completed the music for the first two acts by 1932 (the third act was to remain uncomposed at his death, and is not included in the Met's production). By this time he had thoroughly mastered the technique of "serial composition," which he had begun using roughly a decade earlier, and there is a clear logic connecting an opera about theological monotheism and a compositional technique in which all the notes of a work spring out of a single "tone row."

Similarly, there is also a clear logic in Schoenberg's decision to differentiate the roles of Moses and Aaron so strongly. With only one exception, Moses does not sing. Instead, Schoenberg has him speak his lines on pitch (a technique called *Sprechstimme*) while Aaron transforms Moses' barked speeches into fully sung arias—thus literally making Moses' highly intellectualized lines more sensuous. And while there are some musically striking moments (the rousing Act One finale with the Hebrews' cry of allegiance to the one God, the bone-chilling chorus whispering "Where is Moses" sotto voce before the second act), the overall effect of the music is boredom. The opening scene of Moses before the splendor of the burning bush Schoenberg manages to transform into perhaps the dullest scene in opera. Aaron's melodies—which, to make Schoenberg's point, should be ravishing—never seem to have any purpose and quickly become annoying. Even the orgiastic rites of the Hebrews before the golden calf are leaden.

Simply put, the opera is a dud. But why? Certainly the story is exciting (as the folks at DreamWorks demonstrated again just last year). And while Schoenberg's music is dull, that cannot be blamed on serialism (Berg's *Wozzeck* is serial, and it's one of the most moving works in the repertory). Compositional technique is not to blame here.

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The problem with *Moses und Aron* is that it is about Moses and Aaron. The story of the freeing of Israel isn't about two brothers, but about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's covenant with His chosen people and the gift of the law. For that story, Schoenberg substituted his own tale, only tangentially related to the traditional account.

And there's the rub. Great religious art tends to be a collaboration between an artist and the religious community of which he is a participating member. The faith community nurtures the artist through education, encouragement, commission, and performance; the artist in turn creates as an act of faith within that community. Certainly he creates as an individual (in the West at least), but as an individual who knows that his art grows out of a tradition and speaks back to that tradition. Josquin, Palestrina, Bach, Handel, Mozart, Bruckner, Messiaen: they had deep roots as participating members of religious communities and they all viewed their compositions—and in particular their liturgical works or works on religious themes—as speaking of and to those communities. Their work was individual, even individualistic and unique, but not idiosyncratic.

But frequently this has not been the case in the twentieth century. Many faiths and confessions (and in particular evangelical Protestantism) have shown little interest in nurturing the serious artists within their folds, and many artists have reciprocated this indifference by privatizing their religion and expressing their devotion in works intended for extra-religious venues. Schoenberg's case is illuminating. Although not raised in a religious household, from an early age the Bible became deeply important to him and he read it regularly. In 1898, the twenty-four-year-old composer converted to Christianity, and was baptized a Lutheran in Vienna. In 1933 and then living in Paris, he reconverted to Judaism. Although preoccupied with spiritual themes, in the thirty-five years he was a Christian Schoenberg received no commissions from ecclesiastical establishments, nor is there any evidence that church leaders took any interest in his art. The Jewish community was only slightly more supportive (in 1938 a Los Angeles rabbi did commission the composer to set the "Kol Nidre").

Both as a Christian and as a Jew, Schoenberg's spiritual life was solitary. There is no record of Schoenberg as a Christian ever receiving communion or attending any church; as a Jew (either as a child or an adult) Schoenberg didn't attended synagogue, never learned Hebrew, and made no attempt to keep a kosher home. And while Schoenberg's refusal to participate in the liturgical and communal life of either faith might tempt us to characterize his religious decisions as dilettantish, it would be grossly unfair to do so. Unlike Mahler, who cynically converted to Catholicism in order to gain the directorship of the Vienna State Opera (he called his baptism no more important than "changing coats"), Schoenberg became a Protestant, far less fashionable in imperial Austria-Hungary. And when he returned to Judaism in 1933, he did so in the face of Hitler's rise to power and the legalization of Nazi anti-Semitism. Neither act is that of a man for whom religious matters are things of either convention or convenience. Both of Schoenberg's conversions were acts of courage caused by deeply considered spiritual decisions.

Serious though his decisions were, Schoenberg's isolation from the communal life of faith communities resulted in a personal religion that became ultimately nonsensical because it was so idiosyncratic. A concoction of Bible stories, traditionalisms, romantic philosophy, Jewish nationalism, numerology, and superstition, *Moses und Aron* was Schoenberg's ultimate act of artistic and religious self-expression. (Even the name is a mix of German and English spellings; Schoenberg cobbled them together for kabbalistic purposes.)

But self-expression is not necessarily communication, and one's spirituality is not a shared faith. It's difficult to see how *Moses und Aron* could move either a practicing Jew for whom the Passover event and its remembrance is the center of his identity or a Christian for whom God's deliverance of Israel is the template of his faith. To such people, Schoenberg's god of pure idea and number symbolism must seem only distantly familiar and ultimately trivial. What is such a deity when compared with either the Lord who sent Pharaoh to the bottom of the sea or the God who raised Jesus from the dead?

This is the ultimate failure of Schoenberg's opera. There are good and bad passages in the music, and there are dull and interesting passages in the drama, but as a religious work it is consistently banal. In this way, it is not unlike Bernstein's *Mass* and Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, both works by artists deeply concerned with spiritual issues but espousing only privatized faiths. And while both works have their enthusiasts (indeed, the Stravinsky is considered one of the century's greatest works), neither rise to the level of Bach or even Duruflé. Like Schoenberg, both composers were generally nonpracticing members of their religions (Bernstein a Jew and Stravinsky Russian Orthodox), and developed instead their own brands of spirituality. And

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while both works are aesthetically more successful than Schoenberg's opera, to the religious communities that these works might address, they are equally mute.

Schoenberg did not mean to be mute. He hoped for a day when chamber maids would hum his melodies as they did Puccini's. And he deeply wished for his art to testify to spiritual ends. At the end of his life he did accomplish this goal at least once. Deeply moved by the story of the Warsaw ghetto, in two weeks of August in 1947 Schoenberg wrote a ninety-nine bar melodrama for narrator, male chorus, and orchestra. The work culminates in a shattering presentation by the male chorus of the *Sh'ma Yisroel* as the Jews are lead to their death. Here, by abandoning his own metaphysical concoctions (but not his signature twelve-tone composition technique) and focusing instead upon that which has united Jews in their faith and destiny for millennia, Schoenberg moved beyond aesthetics to a truly religious art. At its premiere in 1948, the audience was stunned into silence. The work remains among the most deeply moving—and transforming—seven minutes in all music.

Sadly, this is not the case with *Moses und Aron*. It is a kind of noble ruin, its flashes of grandeur testifying to what might have been. But the opera's failure is not all Schoenberg's. It is also the failure of those twentieth-century faith communities who were at best indifferent to his presence with them. In the face of such indifference, and sometimes outright hostility, perhaps it is inevitable that an artist's speech stutters, malnourished, the artistic/religious eloquence of previous generations beyond his reach. Yet what is surprising, and perhaps even miraculous, is that in spite of this so many twentieth-century composers chose—and continue to choose—to speak religiously at all, mumbled speech though it be. The painters, architects, and writers stopped even trying long ago.

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Days

Days are an opalescent wave, a pink azalea
shining brightly, and green fire
joyful in a roadside bush.
Nights are a passing pale, a crimson tapestry
turned to black, and the door
to an unhappy room.

Days are her angel eyes and amaranthan smile,
and all the planets a diadem
to her golden hair.
Nights are a long loneliness, a jealous wire
drawn tight around my neck,
and a dying heart.

Days are your son in all the glory of his incarnation;
but he dies as the bright day dies
and leaves us alone again.
Nights are your presence which endures deeper
than absolute dark and absolute cold
and sustains our lives forever.

David A. Gilder

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Shakespeare's Millennium

Edward T. Oakes

When debate about an artist's merit no longer seems to have any point, one is left either with an icon of culture, too sacred to enjoy, or with a target of satire, brought down to our more humdrum level by a vaudeville lampooning of the unapproachable totem, as when graffiti artists paint a moustache on reproductions of the Mona Lisa. Thus we are left, in the case of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), with that oddest of cultural phenomena, Bardolatry, which then almost automatically begets its malign twin: the iconoclastic desire to tear down Shakespeare's undoubted achievement, whether by denying the man was even literate and insisting that his plays had to be written by someone else, *anyone* else (preferably a peer of the realm)—or by making him the ideological tool of Dead White English Man's oppressive, imperial regime, the thin cultural veneer disguising naked British hegemony.

But even among those who have no desire to address the Bard using Juliet's term for her Romeo ("thy gracious self, the god of my idolatry") and who also feel no desire to enroll in what Harold Bloom calls the School of Resentment, Shakespeare's achievement is extraordinarily difficult to specify. Not only are we faced with the immense edifice of Shakespeare scholarship, a massif that simply cannot be scaled by any one mortal. But even more daunting, his own productivity and protean creativity so defy the imagination that one might almost sympathize with the Shakespeare-deniers if the candidates put forward in his stead were not themselves such pathetic blue-blood epicenes—not to mention the fact that the achievement would still remain inexplicable coming from any human being, whatever the color of his blood.

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But since slack-jawed stupefaction can scarcely be said to constitute the beginning moment, let alone the terminating goal, of literary criticism, one must say *something*, or so one supposes, when confronted with Shakespeare's collected works: thirty-eight plays, two lengthy narrative poems, 154 sonnets of unusual intricacy and narrative fascination, and one metaphysical allegory ("The Phoenix and the Turtle"). Computer studies only add to the stupefaction: nearly half of Shakespeare's words were what scholars call *hapax legomena*, that is, words that Shakespeare used only once, having found the one right location for their perfect use and never needing them again. Moreover, one-twelfth of his words make their appearance, at least in print, for the first time in the history of English, most of which must have been of his coinage. Then there is his pace of production: according to commonly accepted dating techniques—using the known dates of Shakespeare's forced retreats from London during the plague years, the year of his final retirement to Stratford, allusions to current events in the plays, and so forth—it seems that during his working life in London he wrote on average two plays each year until the death of Elizabeth in 1603, when the pace slackened to about one play per year during the Jacobean reign.

Because Shakespeare never went to university, much is made—too much, in fact—of the termination of his formal schooling with grammar school. The idea that the greatest playwright of the human race could have poured forth such a cornucopia of genius with only the benefit of a grammar school education does seem to stretch stupefaction past the point of credulity. But the objection ignores both the intensely classical curriculum of Stratford's "grammar" school (which, unlike our modern counterpart, stretched well into a boy's fifteenth or sixteenth year) and Shakespeare's years of young adulthood

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working as a schoolmaster for a wealthy Catholic family in Lancashire, when he had ample opportunity to expand his reading and activate, as a teacher, his passively absorbed pupil's learning.

One also hears from time to time how sparse are the confirmed and reliable details available to the Shakespeare biographer, but this too is more myth than fact, as two recent works, E. A. J. Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The "Lost Years"* (Manchester University Press) and Park Honan's *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford University Press), amply testify. As the famous Elizabethan historian A. L. Rowse rightly points out, "We know more about him than about any other dramatist of the time, with the exception of Ben Jonson, who lived rather later and had a longer life."

Indeed his schooling, far from making it unlikely that a product of its system would emerge as a poet of astonishing rhetorical intricacy, was such that it could hardly have produced anything else. As Honan points out, "With its arid emphasis on verbal artifice, school evidently came too early for him, in some ways narrowing his mind and delaying his success; there are signs, for example, in his mature writing, that he had been too attracted by ringing changes on words, by varying, amplifying, and patterning. . . . This fault is attributable to schools that were hotbeds of literary talent, but not always of self-sustaining life."

Recent research has also uncovered a plethora of evidence pointing to the Catholic and Jesuit sympathies of most of Shakespeare's schoolmasters. Simon Hunt, Shakespeare's first teacher, for example, left his position in 1575 to become a Jesuit priest. One of Shakespeare's fellow pupils, Robert Debdale by name, was executed as a priest in 1586; while studying for the priesthood Debdale shared classes with Thomas Cottom (executed in 1582), whose brother John Cottom was a schoolmaster at Stratford and taught Shakespeare until, under mounting anti-Catholic pressure from the Crown, he fled home to Lancashire, a Catholic stronghold.

Shortly after that, at least according to Honigmann, Shakespeare took up a position, presumably at Cottom's recommendation, as a tutor and player in the Houghton household, a recusant Lancashire family whose property neighbored Cottom's. From the will of one of this family, Alexander Houghton, we know that the family maintained a company of players, for Alexander bequeathed his stock of costumes and musical instruments to a neighbor, one Sir Thomas Hesketh. As it happens, the Hesketh's are mentioned as frequent guests in the hospitality book of the Earl of Derby, the most powerful peer of that region; perhaps it is sheer coincidence, but the son of the fourth Earl of Derby was Ferdinando Stanley, later Lord Strange, whose company of players performed four of Shakespeare's early plays and five of whose members formed the nucleus of the Chamberlain's Men (later called the King's Men when King James I assumed patronage of the company), which Shakespeare joined at its inception and for whom he wrote all the rest of his plays.

Although the evidence connecting Shakespeare to the Catholic nobility of Lancashire is only circumstantial, the evidence of his own family's attachment to Catholicism is direct and overwhelming. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, came from one of the most prominent and tenacious Catholic families in Warwickshire. The head of the clan, Edward Arden, for instance, kept his own Catholic priest, disguised as a gardener but known throughout the Avon valley as Father Hugh Hall. One of Arden's sons-in-law, a hot-headed Catholic fanatic named John Somerville, traveled to London on a personal mission to assassinate the Queen; apparently quite deranged, he betrayed his intentions to anyone who would listen to his rantings during his frequent tavern-hopping. Inevitably, he was arrested and, under torture, implicated Arden and Hall. The priest died in prison while his case was being adjudicated; but in 1583 the hapless Arden was hanged, drawn and quartered, and his head stuck on a spike on London bridge.

William Shakespeare was nineteen years old at the time of his cousin's execution. Well before that traumatic date, from as far back as William's thirteenth year, his father John had apparently begun to run into financial difficulties, at which time he tried to avoid town meetings and church attendance, allegedly to elude summons by subpoena (one could be served for debt in church). Presumably the debts were real (he defaulted on a mortgage in 1580), but the father's financial woes seem to have been exacerbated by Crown revenge against the Ardens. In any event, John's name was later entered on the recusant rolls of Stratford for failing to come to Anglican church services on Sunday, as the law required. One often reads that John Shakespeare's absence was due strictly to his fear of subpoena. But Catholic convictions must have played at least some role in the father's recusancy. On April 27, 1757 a bricklayer working on the son's birthplace in Stratford came across a six-page manuscript, hidden under the roof tiles, of John Shakespeare's last will and spiritual testament. To the rather queasy surprise of eighteenth-century England, the document unhesitatingly affirmed John's Catholic faith (for example, it referred to the "glorious and ever Virgin Mary, refuge and advocate of sinners" and asked for

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intercessory "prayers and Masses" to speed the testator through purgatory).

The authenticity of the document was challenged for a while, but then an English Jesuit, Herbert Thurston, discovered in 1911 that John Shakespeare had taken the testament, almost word for word, from a translation by Jesuits Robert Parsons and Edmund Campion of a testament first composed by Charles Cardinal Borromeo for Catholics in his diocese during the plague years in Milan in the late 1570s. Before leaving for England, Parsons and Campion had visited Borromeo and were given copies of the testament to bring with them; and we know that Campion got to within twelve miles of Stratford before his arrest in June 1581. Somerville's plot was exposed in the fall of 1583, so it must have been around then that John Shakespeare hid—but tellingly did not destroy—his treasonous profession of faith. (There is also a possibility that John's financial difficulties were *caused* by his recusancy, for many Catholic gentlemen of that age often avoided fines by "conveying" their property to friends and relatives.)

None of this can prove anything about William Shakespeare's own private convictions, but we do know that his daughter was fined for recusancy and that William and his fiancée Anne Hathaway married not in his Stratford church but in Temple Grafton, five miles from his birthplace. Neither the Shakespeares nor the Hathaways had connections there, but the vicar of the village, John Frith, was cited in contemporary records as "unsound in religion," a code-term for Catholic priests. And finally, a seventeenth-century Anglican archdeacon from nearby Coventry reported that, according to Stratford oral tradition, Shakespeare "died a papist."

Admittedly, the report as phrased implies that Shakespeare only *returned* to his family's religion—or perhaps that he had even lost his Christian convictions altogether until his last hours. Indeed a common opinion among critics holds that Shakespeare grew increasingly pagan in outlook as his tragic view deepened. Philip Edwards, until recently the King Alfred Professor of English at the University of Liverpool, is perhaps the most balanced representative of this view. "The idea of salvation and damnation," he says, "is central to an understanding of the tragedies, but the nature of the world beyond this world, the demands that it makes on one, and the means to reach it are presented not as something revealed but as a haunting and troubling mystery. There is a great deal of anxious religious questing and very little Christian conviction." Peter Levi, the classicist and poet (and former Jesuit), echoes this view when he observes that Shakespeare's "personal religion, so far as his plays reveal it—which is not very far—seems to have been something like Montaigne's with a touch of neo-Platonism. . . . But his mind had many sides, and he was not, thank God, a theologian, except in the more serious sense in which a poet must be."

These are both plausible views, and for a while I held them too. But then—under the influence of a perhaps surprising source, the writings of British feminist Germaine Greer—I began to reconsider. Taking the play that seems most to evidence Shakespeare's distance from the reconciling vision of the Christian gospel, Greer shows that *King Lear* is actually Shakespeare's most Christian play, and precisely because it is so redolent of Montaigne's worldview (one must not forget that Montaigne was a Christian and wrote as such): "It would be a mistake to interpret the futility of Lear's appeals to his gods as evidence of atheism on Shakespeare's part," she writes. "Rather, like Montaigne, he denies man's right to scan the ways of God or to assume that God's will coincides at any point with his own. This Christian skepticism is neither pessimistic nor cynical, for it is based in acceptance of the benighted human condition."

In other words, Shakespeare's views as a playwright exactly correspond to what he has the character of Isabella (a postulant seeking entrance in a Catholic nunnery, interestingly enough) say in *Measure for Measure*:

> . . . but man, proud man,
> Dressed in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assured—
> His glassy essence—like an angry ape
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As makes the angels weep.

The key to Greer's interpretation—one that makes her short book on Shakespeare for Oxford's "Past Masters" series one of the finest essays on Shakespeare this century—is her insight that the persona of the Fool in *Lear* and other plays largely coincides with the self-portrait of the poet in the Sonnets: both persons, Sonneteer and Fool, are self-deprecatory, marginalized, and contemned, yet for that reason are lethally insightful about the flaws of the nobility. George Orwell once notoriously criticized Shakespeare for his bourgeois-Tory predilection for hierarchy and aristocracy, holding that the views of the playwright came through only in the voice of kings or nobles. But Greer firmly refutes this view, and shows how the Fool's comments in *Lear* indicate how deeply Christian Shakespeare remained throughout his writing career:

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> Orwell thinks that from Shakespeare's writings it would be difficult to know that he had any religion—whereas in fact the placing of truth in the mouths of babes is one aspect of the Christian respect for all human life; that same profound feeling is what inspires us to protest loudly when health authorities take a mental defective off dialysis machine because they consider his "quality of life" too low, in defiance of Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount.

I must admit I rather hesitate to raise the issue of Shakespeare's religion, because at a fundamental level a concentration on his personal beliefs obscures the essence of his achievement. No doubt he participated in the religious life of his country. In public worship (there was, after all, no other legal option) he prayed with a congregation that used Cranmer's superbly crafted Book of Common Prayer and heard at these same services the Bishop's Bible (the immediate predecessor to the King James Authorized Version), echoes of both of which can be detected in the plays, and of course he was buried in Stratford's Trinity Church; while privately he probably held to the Old Religion throughout his life, as recent research is making increasingly evident.

But as an artist he was essentially *unselfconscious.* Even in the history plays, patriotic and devoted to the monarchy as they clearly were, he sounds relatively unpropagandistic; and he must certainly be the most nonideological writer in English, Chaucer alone excepted. (Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Macaulay, Newman, Tennyson all have their personal hobbyhorses to ride, to say nothing of contemporary writers.) Again, Greer is the critic who gives clearest expression to this insight:

> Given the undeniable fact that Shakespeare seldom if ever spoke in his own person, a scrupulous discussion of his thought must take his invisibility into account as an aspect of his intellect. This is not to do what Shakespeare eulogists have so often done in praising him for having "in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling." . . . Rather, he was profoundly aware of and interested in intellectual issues, which he did not choose to simplify, codify, reconcile, or resolve but rather to dramatize. . . . The resolution which is reached is not the negation of the conflict, but the stasis produced by art. Even as we applaud it, we recognize its fragility.

While his authorial modesty might elicit our admiration, we should not attribute it entirely to Shakespeare's personality, even if we accept the sonnets as autobiographical, where the persona of the poet can at times seem to grovel, even to the point of self-contempt. Rather, Shakespeare's work as a playwright, without proprietary concerns for his own work or voice, is entirely a product of his life *in a company of players*: to survive in that appalling, disease-ridden world of fragile egos, he had to be affable, unassuming, and totally subordinate to the company, whose success defined his own. If they failed, so did he.

Above all, he had to be hardworking. In stretches of good weather (and of course when the plague did not loom), a company acted every afternoon except Sundays and during Lent. Moreover, troupes usually put on a different play each afternoon. Each actor, says Honan, usually had to keep at least thirty parts in his head during the span of one month, and a leading actor had to memorize around 800 lines for an afternoon and keep 4,800 lines in mind per week. Mornings were spent in rehearsal for an entirely different play, all without help of a director. Then there was the constant demand for text from the company's playwright. (The idea of that epicene fop, the Earl of Oxford, taking a break from his falconry and hawking or from his documented European travels to supply two plays a year to this rather disreputable band of low-life artisans is risible.)

Most testimonials to Shakespeare, both during his life and in the memorial to him in the First Folio, speak warmly of his pleasant manners and courteous disposition, a feature of his personality that must have stood him in good stead within his touchy, flamboyant, and excitable troupe. But Shakespeare thrived in this demanding environment, and precisely because he tended by nature, if the sonnets are any indication, toward self-effacement, even self-abasement. "Stage demands suited his rapid intellect," Honan notes. "The more self-abnegating he became, the more his imagination really flourished. His daily self-effacing duties would have given him a sense of routine as he sat at his table, and he found he could supply his troupe best by complicating his work and giving it multiple layers of appeal. In the same play, he can affirm and repudiate popular attitudes, and in a sense, by writing plays with subversive, troubling aspects, he remained inside and outside his vocation, and abetted his own development."

Nor would it be too much to say that Shakespeare could only have been the playwright and poet he was in precisely the period of history ending with the last years of the reign of Elizabeth I and in the early years of James I. A. L. Rowse is not

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exaggerating in the least when he avers that if Shakespeare "had been born twenty years earlier or later, his achievement would not have been what it was. The time would not have been ripe, or it would have been overripe, for him and his work as we have it." His career and his work, in other words, "provide a signal example of this fruitful marriage of the right moment with the man." Harold Bloom makes much the same (almost Christological) point in *The Western Canon* when he says with his usual lapidary precision that "the miracle of Shakespeare's universalism is that it is not purchased by any transcending of contingencies."

Theaters, after all, were the only places where all the inhabitants of London—from pickpocket and whore to magistrate and noble—could directly experience their membership in a community, and it was the glory of Elizabethan theater to provide precisely that venue for Shakespeare's art. "In an age when religious zeal turned brother against brother," says Greer, "the drama sought to reunite the people and raise public morale. Shakespeare was remarkably successful in managing potentially inflammable material so as to send audiences home excited and gratified rather than anxious about the deteriorating political situation and increasing instability of the Elizabethan order, but the plays are neither insipid or jingoistic."

Unfortunately, even by the end of Elizabeth's reign the dynamics of London theatrical economics and increasing Puritan hostility were undermining theater's unique public role, unprecedented since the days of Periclean Athens. In a passage telling the sad tale, not of the death of kings, but of the end of Shakespeare's career as a writer of English history plays, Greer points to this new dynamic as the cause:

> By the time he wrote *Henry V* (1598-99) Shakespeare must have been aware that the illusion of unity in English society could no longer be sustained. It was no longer in the power of the dramatist to hold the imagination of all, literate and illiterate, powerful and powerless. The development of the indoor theatres with their greater scenic resources and their prurient interest in matters sensational and intimate rather than public-spirited and universal had divided the Globe's audience while other entertainments vied for the groundlings' halfpence. The most talented newcomers to write for the theatre had a different viewpoint at once loftier and more limited.

Still, for a brief window of opportunity, Shakespeare could put his fluency to work to create exactly the art that has made him the greatest dramatist of the human race. Shakespeare, though, was not a mere product of his time. Rather, he is an example of what the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar calls a "relative singularity." Here is his discussion:

> Great works of art appear like inexplicable miracles and spontaneous eruptions on the stage of history. Sociologists are as unable to calculate the precise day of their origin as they are to explain in retrospect why they appeared when they did. Of course, works of art are subject to certain preconditions without which they cannot come into being: such conditions may be effective stimuli but do not provide a full explanation of the work itself. Shakespeare had his predecessors, contemporaries, and models; he was surrounded by the atmosphere of the theater of his time. He could only have emerged within that context. Yet who would dare offer to prove that his emergence was inevitable?

It is one thing to *examine* all the necessary presuppositions and prior requirements that make possible the emergence of a work of art; but it is another thing entirely to claim that one has thereby *accounted* for that work of art. This is to mistake the sudden manifestation of the phenomenon for its presuppositions (a common mental habit called "the genetic fallacy"). And this fallacy is a perennial danger for scholars whose job it is to concentrate on narrating the history of origins until the story ends up at the termination point: the text itself. This movement of going from beginning to end in the narratives of historical critics can make it seem as if the beginning accounts for the end, rather than the end representing an astonishing fulfillment and supersession of what went before. But we can only fall into that trap because we are already in possession of the work and so we know how our etiological narrative will conclude. But this is to fail to come to terms with the work itself, *which must itself determine how its own past is to be interpreted.*

As Balthasar also points out, the singularity of the great work of art makes it *greater* than its time, and likely to be misunderstood by those who are so caught up within their time that they are unable to appreciate it.

> A great work of art has a certain universal comprehensibility but discloses itself more profoundly and more truly to an individual the more attuned and practiced his powers of perception are. Not everyone picks up the

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> unique inflection of the Greek in a chorus of Sophocles, or of the German of Goethe's *Faust*, or of the French in a poem of Valéry. Subjective adaptation can add something of its own, but that objective adequacy which is able to distinguish the noble from the commonplace is more important.

Although he does not share the theological freedom so radiantly on display in Balthasar's work, and indeed is rather phobic toward Christianity, Harold Bloom echoes Balthasar's insistence on the primacy of the aesthetic and even comes close to seeing how resentment against aesthetic primacy is rooted in, and arises from, an ideologization of culture that will fear all true singularities, relative or otherwise. In other words, aesthetic contemplation, by its very nature as disinterested appreciation of the singular, refutes any and all ideologies, which is why Bloom hails Shakespeare as the single greatest refutation of all later ideal schemas, programs, reeducation camps, and brainwashing propaganda. "We are all feminist critics," he quotes one professor as proclaiming, and then replies: "That is the rhetoric suitable for an occupied country, one that expects no liberation from liberation." No wonder, then, that in so many English departments in this nation "the teaching of poems, plays, stories, and novels is now supplanted by cheerleading for various social and political causes."

Even on the face of it, this project should strike everyone as absurd and self-defeating. ("The idea that you benefit the insulted and injured by reading someone of their own origins rather than reading Shakespeare is one of the oddest illusions ever promoted in our schools.") But more crucially it begs the question by feeding off Shakespeare's preeminence precisely by attacking *him* and not, say, Ben Jonson or Christopher Marlowe, who presumably are equally the products of class myopia and imperial designs:

> Shakespeare's eminence is, I am certain, the rock upon which the School of Resentment must at last founder. How can they have it both ways? If it is arbitrary that Shakespeare centers the Canon, then they need to show why the dominant social class selected him rather than, say, Ben Jonson, for that arbitrary role. Or if history and not the ruling circles exalted Shakespeare, what was it in Shakespeare that so captivated the mighty Demiurge, economic and social history? Clearly this line of inquiry begins to border on the fantastic; how much simpler to admit that there is a *qualitative* difference, a difference in kind, between Shakespeare and every other writer, even Chaucer, even Tolstoy, or whoever. Originality is the great scandal that resentment cannot accommodate, and Shakespeare remains the most original writer we will ever know.

By calling Shakespeare "nonideological," and by joining Bloom in hailing him as a refutation of all those ideologies that offer us no hope of "liberation from liberation," I am not claiming that he passed his life in a hermetically sealed realm of pure aesthetics, blissfully unaware of the passions and ideas that were tearing apart the English nation. Quite the contrary: where Elizabethans were unanimous in their worldview (hierarchy, Great Chain of Being, immortality of the soul, etc.), Shakespeare was one with his contemporaries.

But where his countrymen differed and hurled themselves into the conflict over ideas, Shakespeare participated by *dramatizing* the conflict, not by *contributing* to it. And that is the source of his greatness; for the aesthetic, properly understood, *subsumes* all ideologies by understanding them from within and by giving us true liberation through that understanding. Balthasar and Bloom converge at this point, one from a theological and the other from a literary perspective; but perhaps Bloom can illustrate the point better because of the way Shakespeare has managed to liberate Bloom himself from his own previous excessive attachment to Freud:

> Here they [that is, the professional Resenters] confront insurmountable difficulty in Shakespeare's most idiosyncratic strength: he is always ahead of you, conceptually and imagistically, whoever and whenever you are. He renders you anachronistic because he *contains* you; you cannot subsume him. You cannot illuminate him with a new doctrine, be it Marxism or Freudianism or Demanian linguistic skepticism. Instead, he will illuminate the doctrine, not by prefiguration but by postfiguration, as it were: all of Freud that matters most is there in Shakespeare already, with a persuasive critique of Freud besides. The Freudian map of the mind is Shakespeare's; Freud seems only to have prosified it. Or, to vary my point, a Shakespearean reading of Freud illuminates and overwhelms the text of Freud; a Freudian reading of Shakespeare reduces Shakespeare, or would if we could bear a reduction that crosses the line into absurdities of loss. *Coriolanus* is a far more powerful reading of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*

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of Louis Napoleon than any Marxist reading of *Coriolanus* could hope to be.

No doubt Shakespeare shared in the stereotypes of his day. In fact, one will occasionally come across the complaint that Shakespeare's thought is too homespun, too reliant on proverbs and folk wisdom, too "bromidic," as it were, to be of service to a philosopher or theologian—or ideologue. George Bernard Shaw and George Orwell frequently opined in this manner. But this observation (which contains a grain of truth) misses a central point: the ideas that do appear in the plays—monarchism, hierarchy, ambition, fidelity to one's marriage vows or to one's king, the ideal of chastity in some, the celebration of concupiscence in others, etc.—all function, so to speak, as *actors* in the plot. That is, Shakespeare presents no overarching idea meant to serve as a soapbox from which the playwright can browbeat the audience with his convictions. The folk wisdom that gets expressed from time to time by various actors thus serves as a kind of implicit Greek chorus commenting on the action. And precisely because the proverbs and folk wisdom being expressed *are true*, and recognized as true by the audience, they create a bond between the meaning of the play and the experience of the spectators.

Both Orwell and Shaw thus have a point when they accuse Shakespeare of having a philosophy that rarely transcends the hackneyed, time-tested saws of folk wisdom. But the truth of this wisdom is what counts. Moreover, one of the rarely noticed gifts that make his plays so engaging is his ability to turn bromides, clichés, and proverbs into *music*. Somewhat like Mozart transforming the rather silly libretto for *The Magic Flute* into the most extraordinary melodies, Shakespeare can take the rather pedestrian awkwardness of English, with its clumsy consonant clusters, random stress accents, and unmusical cadences, and turn it into an arresting melody.

I can cite only two examples here. Just before the Friar marries Romeo and Juliet in a secret ceremony, Romeo shows up in church too excited and in love to prepare himself properly for the sacred rite. The Friar upbraids him for his adolescent hot blood and sternly admonishes him, using words whose message scarcely means much more than "haste makes waste" but whose musical *phrasing* immediately awakens the audience to the real meaning of the couple's tragedy:

> *These violent delights have violent ends*
> And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
> Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
> Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
> And in the taste confounds the appetite.
> Therefore, love moderately; long love doth so:
> Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Similarly with evil. Everyone knows that evil is a real force in the world and cuts a hole in the fabric of Being; but that gash in Being is also what makes evil, in the metaphysical sense, a non-entity, a gap, a privation. Everyone also knows that good can come out of evil, as when a plague of insects devastates the fields of a one-crop economy, forcing the region to diversify. (There is a statue of the cotton-destroying boll weevil in front of the statehouse in Birmingham, Alabama, for just this reason.) But every hospital chaplain also knows that patients are not in the least comforted by being told that "God draws good out of evil," or that "evil is only a privation in relation to being."

Now, any playwright who can compose *King Lear* and *Othello* needs no instruction from metaphysicians or theologians on the nature of evil as a real and active force in human history and in the human personality. But Shakespeare also had an abiding sense of evil's strange, shadowy *evanescence*, especially in the later plays, where a reconciling mood seems to lift evil off its hinges. But this reconciliation never seems forced or cheaply won, because the truth of the bromides "evil is a privation" and "God draws good out of evil" are *enacted*, not pronounced. Wittgenstein gets this point exactly right when he says that "Shakespeare displays the dance of human passions, one might say. Hence he has to be objective; otherwise he would not so much display the dance of human passions—as talk about it."

The enactment, however, must still at some point include a "speech act" pointing out the meaning of the action, and here once more Shakespeare is able to exploit the resources of folk wisdom, to turn it into music, and to place it in the mouth of one of his characters, who at that moment becomes the chorus commenting on the meaning of the play. But because Shakespeare rarely uses an actor whose sole role is to play the chorus, he avoids the danger of didacticism, and lets the wisdom embed itself in the action of the play (which is why so many of Shakespeare's characters, including even Iago, both seem and do not seem to express the playwright's viewpoint). Somewhat at random I shall cite this example from *Henry V*:

> Gloucester, 'tis true that we are in great danger;
> The greater therefore should our courage be.
> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distill it out.

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For our bad neighbor makes us early stirrers,
Which is both healthful and good husbandry.
Besides, they are our outward consciences,
And preachers to us all, admonishing
That we dress us fairly for our end:
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the devil himself.

No wonder, then, that Dr. Johnson could say of Shakespeare that "he seems to produce, without labor, what no labor can improve." How he manages to have characters speak lines in such arresting melodies enunciating such obvious truths and yet in a voice that seems to correspond exactly both to the personality of the character and to the situation of the moment is, of all Shakespeare's achievements, the most mysterious to explain and the hardest to specify.

The editors of First Things did not choose Shakespeare for their millennium series, preferring Calvin for the sixteenth century and Pascal for the seventeenth. I concur. For the singular, universal genius of Shakespeare makes him a poor representative of those ideologically riven centuries, while at the same time his sublime freedom makes him the obvious choice for man of the millennium, the one man of the past one thousand years who can promise us liberation from liberation. Who else *is* there? FT

The Tree

The fruit of the branch
of the trunk of the tree
that smells like eternity
breathes its fragrance
into the branch whose sap
drips like red wine
onto the parched sand
where my feet are buried
beneath the shadow of the tree.

The breath of the branch
of the trunk of the tree
that smells like wind
whispers its name in blood
to the cracks in the ground
where my hands lie buried
beneath the shadow of the tree.

The fruit of the branch
of the trunk of the tree
that smells like life
moves into the trunk whose roots
entangle it in the beginning
whose eternal circle of life
bends toward the wasteland
where my side lies buried
beneath the shadow of the tree.

Julie L. Anderson

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Two Languages of Salvation: The Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration

Avery Dulles

One of the central themes of the New Testament, if not the central theme, is the way to obtain salvation. To be on the right road is, in New Testament terminology, to be justified. The corollary is that unless we are justified we are unrighteous and are on the road to final perdition. In other words, justification, as a right relationship with God, is a matter of eternal life or death. If it is not important, nothing is.

According to Christian faith, justification is a gift of God, who grants it through His Son and the Holy Spirit. Fifteen hundred years of intense reflection have left us with a number of questions. Four seem to me to be crucial: 1) Is justification the action of God alone, or do we who receive it cooperate by our response to God's offer of grace? 2) Does God, when He justifies us, simply impute to us the merits of Christ, or does He transform us and make us intrinsically righteous? 3) Do we receive justification by faith alone, or only by a faith enlivened by love and fruitful in good works? 4) Is the reward of heavenly life a free gift of God to believers, or do they merit it by their faithfulness and good works?

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther came up with answers to all these questions based primarily on his study of Paul. He affirmed, first, that justification, as God's act, is independent of all human cooperation. Justification, secondly, consists in the favor of God, who freely imputes to us the merits of Christ. It is not a matter of inner renewal. Justification, in the third place, is received by faith alone, independently of any good works or obedience to God's law. And finally, eternal life is a sheer gift; it is not merited by good behavior.

At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, the Emperor Charles V ordered the Lutheran party to explain its position. They did so in the Augsburg Confession, composed by Philip Melanchthon at the behest of Luther. A group of theologians assembled by the Emperor studied that Confession and faulted it at several points, especially for its teaching on merit.

After several colloquies had unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile the Catholic and Lutheran positions, the Council of Trent in 1547 set forth the official Catholic doctrine in its Decree on Justification. The Council taught that although justification is an unmerited gift, it needs to be freely accepted, so that human cooperation is involved. Secondly, it taught that justification consists in an inner renewal brought about by divine grace; thirdly, that justification does not take place by faith without hope, charity, and good works; and finally, that the justified, by performing good works, merit the reward of eternal life.

For the next four hundred years the two churches went their separate ways. The divisions were hardened by polemical tracts. But in the ecumenical climate of the present century, as represented by Vatican II, both sides have striven to appreciate what is authentically Christian in the other's positions and to achieve the greatest possible degree of consensus. Bilateral dialogues dealing with justification have been conducted on the international level and in several countries.

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The United States Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in 1983 published an important statement that highlighted twelve important points of agreement. The sixty-page statement concluded with a Common Declaration setting forth what it called "a fundamental consensus on the gospel." According to this declaration, justification is an undeserved gift granted through Jesus Christ and received in faith, whereby we pass from sin to freedom and fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit. At the end of its statement the Dialogue asked the respective churches to study this consensus and make appropriate decisions for the purpose of confessing the faith in unison. It also stated that in view of the convergences achieved, the remaining theological differences about the doctrine of justification, though serious, need not be considered church-dividing.

The American dialogue had important repercussions. An ecumenical group of Protestant and Catholic theologians in Germany in 1985 undertook a study of the condemnations issued by each church in the sixteenth century. Concluding that none of these condemnations held against the partner church today, this study proposed that the churches make binding pronouncements to the effect that those condemnations should no longer be cited as if they still held against the other church. The canons on justification in the Council of Trent and in the Lutheran Book of Concord figured prominently in this study.

From 1986 to 1993 the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Commission conducted its own study of the problem of justification and in its final statement, *Church and Justification*, supported the conclusions of the North American dialogue and applied them to ecclesiology. Thus the road seemed clear for the churches to take some official action signifying their acceptance of the results of the dialogues.

The Joint Declaration was drafted in 1994 by a small committee of church officials and ecumenical professionals appointed by the Holy See and the Lutheran World Federation. Their mandate was to summarize the results of the dialogues and pave the way for a public act of solidarity and reconciliation.

The Lutheran World Federation submitted the draft to 124 Lutheran member churches and obtained responses from eighty-nine—eighty favorable, five opposed, and four mixed. In the light of the official reactions and private theological critiques, the text was revised to produce the final version of 1997. On June 16, 1998 the governing council of the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland, unanimously approved the Joint Declaration.

The Roman authorities were not bound to conduct any consultation, but informal reactions were obtained. Because the Holy See had been heavily involved in the composition, its acceptance was taken for granted. But to the surprise of many observers the Council for Promoting Christian Unity on June 25, 1998 released an "Official Response" expressing a number of severe criticisms and apparently calling into question the consensus expressed by the Joint Declaration.

After a flurry of conferences the parties drew up an "Official Common Statement," an "Annex," and a "Note on the Annex" that addressed some of the Roman questions and got the process back on track. The official signing ceremony was held in Augsburg on Sunday, October 31, 1999, the date that Lutherans annually observe as Reformation Day. Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians, signed for the Catholic Church and a number of officials signed for the Lutheran World Federation. The event was an historic one because the disagreements on the doctrine of justification are generally regarded as the principal cause of the division between Protestants and Catholics in the sixteenth century.

The heart of the Joint Declaration is surely paragraph 15, and more particularly the sentence: "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." This consensus does not go beyond the clear conclusions of the dialogues. While it is in perfect accord both with the Augsburg Confession and with the Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent, it dispels some false stereotypes inherited from the past. Lutherans have often accused Catholics of holding that justification is a human achievement rather than a divine gift received in faith, while Catholics have accused Lutherans of holding that justification by faith does not involve inner renewal or good works. By mentioning both faith and works, both acceptance by God and the gift of the Holy Spirit, this sentence strikes an even-handed balance calculated to satisfy both sides.

If the Joint Declaration had stopped at this point, it would have been a breakthrough of sorts because the two churches have never in the past jointly expressed their shared convictions about justification. But the Declaration goes further. In the following paragraphs it addresses an assortment of subordinate questions that have proved divisive. First of all

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comes a general question of method: Does the doctrine of justification hold a privileged position as the criterion by which all other Christian doctrines are to be judged, or is it to be viewed as one doctrine among many? Then the Joint Declaration takes up seven more specific issues. To simplify somewhat the language of the Declaration, one could list these issues as questions:

1) Do the justified cooperate in the preparation for, and reception of, justification?
2) Is justification a divine decree of forgiveness or interior renewal?
3) Is justification received by faith alone or by faith together with hope and charity, which bring one into communion with God?
4) Does concupiscence, that is to say, our innate tendency to be self-indulgent, make us sinners, even when we do not give in to it?
5) Is God's law given only in order to accuse sinners of their failures, bringing them to repentance, or also to provide them with a rule of life that they can and must observe?
6) Does faith include an assurance that one will in fact attain final salvation?
7) Are the heavenly rewards for which we hope things that we also merit, or are they to be understood exclusively as undeserved gifts from God?

Each of these seven points, like the preliminary question about criteria, is treated in three phases: a brief formulation of the consensus, a Lutheran perspective, and a Catholic perspective. Lutherans and Catholics are not expected to accept each other's perspectives, but only to acknowledge that these perspectives are tolerable, in the sense that they escape the condemnations pronounced by each church in the sixteenth century. But even this, as we shall see, is a bold statement, difficult to defend.

The delicacy of the matter is illustrated by the Official Response of the Catholic Church to the Joint Declaration issued in June 1998. It is divided into two parts. The first is an acceptance of the remarkable convergence already achieved. The second part calls for theological clarification of some unresolved issues.

In this second section the Official Response is rather blunt, but the seriousness of the matter calls for more than diplomacy. For example, it asks about the doctrinal authority of the Lutheran World Federation and the synods or ecclesial bodies it consulted. Can they speak decisively for the Lutheran community? The Response also calls attention to some lacunae in the Joint Declaration, such as its lack of attention to the sacrament of penance, in which justification is restored to those who have lost it. In addition, it contests the Lutheran view that the doctrine of justification is the supreme touchstone of right doctrine. It asserts, on the contrary, that the doctrine of justification must be integrated into the "rule of faith," which is centered on the triune God, the Incarnation, the Church, and the sacraments. Most importantly for our present purposes, the Catholic Response raises the question whether the Lutheran positions as explained in the Joint Declaration really escape the anathemas of the Council of Trent. Without repeating the exact words of the Official Response, I can indicate some of the objections it poses regarding the first, second, fourth, and seventh of the issues I have mentioned in my summary of the Joint Declaration.

Regarding the first issue, human cooperation in the preparation for and reception of justification, the Council of Trent taught under anathema that the recipients of justification cooperate freely in their own justification and do not receive it purely passively as if they were puppets (can. 4, DS 1554). The Joint Declaration contends, on the contrary, that human beings possess "no freedom in relation of salvation" (para. 19) and that "God's gift of grace in justification remains independent of human cooperation" (para. 24). It reports Lutherans as holding that we are merely passive in receiving grace and make no contribution to our own justification, even while conceding that we are "fully involved personally in [our] faith" (para. 21). These statements are intelligible only if one understands justification as a divine decree, prior to any human act of faith or love. The Catholic response quite understandably asks whether the Joint Declaration on this point can be harmonized with Trent, which, as we shall see, teaches a very different doctrine of justification.

The second issue goes right to the heart of the matter and is considered by the Official Response the most serious obstacle to agreement. Does justification consist in an imputation of Christ's righteousness, as Lutherans generally hold, or in an interior renewal and sanctification, as the Council of Trent taught? Lutherans distinguish between justification and sanctification, making the first prior to the second, whereas for Trent justification and sanctification are two sides of the same coin. The Joint Declaration seeks to achieve consensus by treating justification and sanctification as two distinct but inseparable aspects of God's saving action. The

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process involves both the forgiveness of sin and the divine self-gift. Lutherans, who emphasize the element of forgiveness, do not deny renewal, but they insist that God's justifying action is not dependent on the transformative effects of His grace. Catholics, who emphasize interior renewal through the reception of God's gift, do not wish to deny that God's saving initiative precedes our response and is independent of it.

Does this explanation succeed in bridging the gap between the two positions? The answer depends on what kind of renewal is understood to be involved in justification. Are we really made righteous through being interiorly renewed, as the Council of Trent insisted (can. 10, DS 1560), or is our righteousness a non-imputation of sin or an imputation of the "alien righteousness" of Christ, as Lutherans have commonly said? So far as I can see, the Lutheran position in the Joint Declaration favors the theory of alien righteousness that was rejected at Trent.

This reading of the Lutheran position is confirmed by the handling of the fourth issue, that of concupiscence—a technical term signifying the disorderly desires and spiritual weakness that afflict our fallen human nature. Lutherans hold that the justified person remains a sinner because "concupiscence" is not removed by baptism. In their view the justified person is, as the phrase goes, *simul justus et peccator*—at once righteous and a sinner. Catholics, by contrast, hold that concupiscence is not sin, and that justification removes all that can properly be called sin. The Council of Trent taught that justification effectively makes us righteous and condemned the view that our justification is only an imputation of Christ's righteousness (DS 1560-61). It also condemned under anathema the view that concupiscence is sin (DS 1515). When Lutherans say that concupiscence makes people sinners, they seem to imply that it makes us guilty before God and needs to be forgiven or at least covered over by the merits of Christ. This was and is contrary to Catholic teaching.

Still another issue flagged by the Official Catholic Response was that of merit, the seventh on my list. The Joint Declaration states quite correctly the position of both churches, namely, that nothing preceding justification merits justification. In that sense justification is a totally free gift of God. But Lutherans and Catholics have disagreed about whether one can, after justification, merit the increase of grace and the reward of eternal life. Trent clearly says yes. Lutherans have denied this. The Joint Declaration attempts the following compromise:

> When Catholics affirm the "meritorious" character of good works, they wish to say that, according to the biblical witness, a reward in heaven is promised to these works. Their intention is to emphasize the responsibility of persons for their actions, not to contest the character of those works as gifts or far less to deny that justification always remains the unmerited gift of grace. (para. 38)

This statement seems to fall short of what Catholics believe and what Trent teaches under anathema. The fact that a reward is promised does not make it merited, since one can promise to bestow gifts that are completely undeserved. In the Catholic view, justification makes us capable of meriting in a true sense. Yet eternal life is also a gift because our capacity to merit is God's gift, which is itself unmerited.

Many other objections could be raised against the claim of the Joint Declaration that the condemnations of the sixteenth century no longer apply to the partner churches, even on the particular issues it took up. On the third issue in my list, whether we are justified by faith alone, it is very difficult to make out a consensus since the Lutheran position is based on the assumption that faith is the means whereby we are clothed with the merits of Christ, in whom we believe. Lutherans reject justification as interior renewal because in their view such renewal is always imperfect and presupposes justification. Here again, no agreement has been reached.

Because of the serious criticisms made in the Official Response, many assumed that the Joint Declaration was as good as dead. But the Holy See, almost unaccountably, continued to insist on its readiness to sign. How could the Vatican agree to sign a document that it found so defective?

The Annex appended to the Official Common Statement of 1999 purports to give further clarifications, but I personally do not find it helpful. It simply piles up more quotations from Scripture and from the sixteenth-century documents that were presumably familiar to the authors of the Catholic response.

To explain the attitude of the Holy See it seems important to say something about ecumenical method as currently understood in the Catholic Church. Vatican II, which is normative, lays down the basic principles. It states that the separated churches can acknowledge each other as truly Christian and as being in a state of real though imperfect communion (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 3). Dialogues between experts from different churches and eccle-

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sial communities should be undertaken with a view to restoring full communion (*UR* 4). The deposit of faith has been handed down in different ways in different places and cultures (*UR* 14). The deposit of faith is one thing, and theological formulation quite another (*Gaudium et Spes* 62). Varying theological formulations must often be considered complementary rather than conflicting. "It is hardly surprising, then, if sometimes one tradition has come nearer than the other to an apt appreciation of certain aspects of a revealed mystery, and has expressed them more lucidly" (*UR* 17).

John Paul II in his encyclical on ecumenism reaffirms these principles and insists that theological dialogue must take account of the ways of thinking and historical experiences of the other party (*Ut Unum Sint* 36). Assertions that reflect different ways of looking at the same reality, he says, should not be treated as though they were mutually contradictory (*UUS* 38).

According to an older theological model, ecumenism would aspire to take the statements of the Lutheran Book of Concord and those of the Catholic councils one by one, and examine them atomistically and fit them into a single internally coherent system. What seems to be surfacing is a willingness to acknowledge that we have here two systems that have to be taken holistically. Both take their departure from the Scriptures, the creeds, and early tradition. But they filter the data through different thought-forms, or languages.

The Catholic thought-form, as expressed at Trent, is Scholastic, and heavily indebted to Greek metaphysics. The Lutheran thought-form is more existential, personalistic, or, as some prefer to say, relational. The Scholastics adopt a contemplative point of view, seeking explanation. Luther and his followers, adopting a confessional posture, seek to address God and give an account of themselves before God. In that framework all the terms take on a different hue. For a Lutheran to say that we are merely passive in receiving justification, that we are justified by faith alone, that justification is an imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that the justified continue to be sinners, that concupiscence is sin, that God's law accuses us of our guilt, and that eternal life is never merited—all these statements are possible and necessary in the Lutheran system. These statements find strong resonances in the Catholic literature of proclamation and spirituality.

In the dialogues of the past fifty years, Catholics and Lutherans have come to respect one another as Christian believers. We find that in spite of our different thought-forms, our different languages, we can say many things—the most important things—in common. And precisely because of our different perspectives we can learn from one another. Lutherans can teach Catholics that we must be in some sense passive in submitting to God's word, that we must always acknowledge ourselves as sinners, that God's law never ceases to accuse us, that we must throw ourselves on God's mercy, and that we depend on the perfect righteousness of Christ, without being able to make it completely our own. For all these reasons it now seems appropriate to measure the Lutheran theses against some standard other than the decrees of Trent, valid though those decrees are in Catholic dogmatic teaching.

The Official Catholic Response, in its concluding section, calls for deeper reflection on the biblical foundation in light of a joint effort on the part of Lutherans and Catholics to forge a language that can make the doctrine of justification more meaningful to men and women of our day. In face of a world that is so alien to the gospel, our churches are called to unite their forces in restoring missionary and evangelistic power to the gospel message of God's powerful mercy.

These considerations, I think, are behind the eagerness of the Catholic Church, at the very highest level, to sign the Joint Declaration, even while recognizing that theologians have not yet been able to establish how, or to what extent, certain Lutheran positions can be reconciled with official Catholic teaching. It is not enough to say that we have different frameworks of discourse. It is necessary to establish that Lutheran proclamation and Catholic speculation are both legitimate derivatives of the same gospel, and therefore compatible. Performative language cannot be unrelated to informative; the law of prayer must harmonize with the law of belief. The Joint Declaration, helpful though it is, has not overcome all difficulties. More theological work is needed.

The Declaration differs from documents of the Catholic Magisterium that are drafted and promulgated by persons in full communion with the Church of Rome. The Roman Response indicates that theological misgivings can legitimately be expressed from the Catholic side, and the same will presumably be true among Lutherans. But notwithstanding all the theological reservations on both sides, the signing of the Declaration with the "blessing" of John Paul II can be a powerful symbolic event. It says clearly to a world that hovers on the

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brink of unbelief that the two churches that split Western Christendom on the issue of justification nearly five centuries ago are still united on truths of the highest import. They can confess together that we are sinful members of a sinful race, that God offers us the gift of justification, that this offer comes through Christ, our only Savior, that it is received in faith, that the Holy Spirit is conferred upon those who believe, and that, having been inwardly renewed, they are called and equipped to excel in deeds of love. In view of this shared heritage of faith, we are confident that our doctrinal formulations, currently expressed in different idioms, can in the end be reconciled. Our readiness to declare the non-applicability of the sixteenth-century condemnations on justification is based on this conviction. FT

Through the Gray

Eliot's wasteland is gray,
Sandswept clean, rubbing raw bones brilliant,
left to be found by paleontologists who wonder about soils.

Ants will die in the rubble of earthquakes
leaving bowels strewn across the universe,
rotting away even Saturn's rings.

Somewhere love has slipped the stars together,
elusive and godlike,
drawing bison in blood across cave walls,
chasing antelope and women.

Karakoram tosses on high the black sands of the wasteland,
Faltering, souls and bones.

Gnawing in the sandstorm,
the fingers of God wear thin.
Only the desert thrives, under simmering heat,
boiling gray to black and red to brown and white to ashes.

But somewhere love has dipped the arc of a Monarch in an orange pot,
ambered deep in resin.

The Kush rise.
In anger the wilderness shrivels,
threatening disintegration.

A water drop halts, Christlike,
a pale crock shard lies bleached,
an urn spirits chameleons in the dark.

Somewhere love channels the wind soft through the catacombs,
rolling sand grains, filling Karakum,
leveling crags and mountaintops,
bringing low Gamaliel,
and ragged ends of bone,
curved rib and crooked hip.

Eden begins the wasteland,
pulling shadows in,
while the cross hangs barren.

Another time crashes in upon this one,
and extinction never comes again.

White, cocoon white,
Sand.
Dawn.
Resurrection.

Kathleen Morelock

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John Paul II and the Crisis of Humanism

George Weigel

As *Time* and other premillennial makers-of-lists have discovered in recent months, there is no lack of candidates for the position of emblematic figure of the twentieth century.

In the world of politics alone, there are several plausible nominees on a slate that includes the admirable and the odious in fairly equal proportion: Churchill, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Roosevelt, Reagan. Widening the search beyond the world of organized political power, a powerful case can be made for James Watson and Francis Crick, unravelers of the DNA "double-helix," the key to biotechnology and what will almost certainly be the most urgent set of issues on the twenty-first century's public agenda. In a historical period dramatically shaped by the application, for good or ill, of new scientific knowledge, some might also argue for Fermi, Heisenberg, or another of the great mid-century nuclear physicists as the man who made the most enduring impact on our times. And while his status as a scientist and a student of the human condition has been badly shaken in recent decades, there is no doubt that Sigmund Freud had an enormous impact on the twentieth century.

There is an element of the arbitrary in all such list-making, of course. And indeed here is an instance where the postmodern passion for hermeneutics makes eminent sense. In choosing the emblematic figure of the century now drawing rapidly to a close, it really is a matter of how one looks at things—in this instance, the dynamics of history.

If one believes that politics is not an independent variable in human affairs—if (as so many have argued in these pages) politics is a function of culture, and at the heart of culture is *cultus*, religion, what we cherish and what we worship—then a serious case can be made for Pope John Paul II as the man who most singularly embodies humanity's trials and triumphs in the twentieth century.

One facet of the "culture first" case for John Paul II's preeminence is institutional. The Roman Catholic Church has arguably been the most influential religious community of the past ten decades in shaping the world the twenty-first century will inherit; the Catholic Church has been decisively formed for the next century by John Paul's authoritative interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, the most important religious event of *this* century; therefore John Paul II can be considered the twentieth century's seminal figure. Moreover, his teachings will be institutionally developed and carried into the future, unlike another great Slavic moral witness with a plausible claim to being the man of the century, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. In making that case, of course, it has to be remembered that a great reforming Pope and his accomplishments are not an individual achievement. John Paul II emerged from the heart of the Church and the priesthood, and he cannot be understood apart from that.

But a deeper argument can and should be explored here. John Paul II is not the emblematic figure of the twentieth century simply because his teachings and witness, which have had such a demonstrable impact on the history of our times, will be institutionally extended into the future, unlike the teachings of Churchill, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, FDR, or Reagan. No, John Paul II is arguably *the* iconic figure of the twentieth century because his life has embodied, personally and spiritually, the human

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crises with which Churchill, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, FDR, and Reagan (not to mention Watson and Crick, Heisenberg, Fermi, and Freud) were all engaged in their distinctive ways. And his teaching, which has emerged from a profound philosophical and theological reflection on those crises, has demonstrated the resilience, indeed the indispensability, of religious conviction in addressing the crisis of contemporary humanism. The twentieth century, which began with the confident assertion that a maturing humanity had outgrown its "need" for religion, proved that men could indeed organize the world without God. It also proved that, in doing so, men could only organize the world against each other, bringing humanity to the brink of catastrophe on more than one occasion.

Finally, if one believes that the Christian movement bears the truth of the world's story, then John Paul II looms very large indeed. So, of course, do others: Billy Graham, who gave a new dynamism and unprecedented worldwide reach to evangelical Protestantism; Karl Barth, embodiment of the last great effort within the sixteenth-century Reformation traditions to reconstitute Christian orthodoxy apart from Rome or the Christian East. But neither Graham nor Barth became the kind of global moral witness that John Paul II has become. And in that sense (for the Pope insists that his public moral witness is, *semper et ubique*, a function of his Christian faith), neither was the kind of evangelist that John Paul II has been, throughout the worlds-within-worlds of humanity.

Nineteen sixty-eight was a bad year in a century replete with bad years. In February of the year in which the West seemed to come apart at the seams and Red Army tanks crushed the reform communism of the Prague Spring, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow wrote his friend, the Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac, about the large-scale philosophical project on which he was engaged in the midst of his pastoral responsibilities:

> I devote my very rare free moments to a work that is close to my heart and devoted to the metaphysical sense and mystery of the *person*. It seems to me that the debate today is being played out on that level. The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person. This evil is even more of the metaphysical order than of the moral order. To this disintegration planned at times by atheistic ideologies we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of "recapitulation" of the inviolable mystery of the person.

That radical humanism—that life-forming commitment to "the inviolable mystery of the person"—was, and is, Karol Wojtyla's response to a century in which false humanisms had created mountains of corpses and an ocean of blood, Auschwitz and the Gulag, abortion as a widespread means of fertility regulation, and the prospect of the biotechnical remanufacture of the *humanum*. In thinking through, preaching, writing about, and acting upon the implications of a radical humanism worthy of the human person, John Paul II addressed three of the most pressing issues on the human agenda in a way that seems likely to shape the debate on those issues long into the future: the priority of culture, the nature of sexual love, and the anthropology of freedom.

In the first instance, he boldly challenged the notion, rampant throughout the century, that either politics or economics was the engine of world-historical change.

The twentieth century experienced the lethal consequences of the political madnesses set loose in the world by the French Revolution. And this made it all the more striking (and perhaps indicative of the divine sense of irony) that the collapse of totalitarianism as a plausible political model came in 1989, two hundred years after the Jacobin fire had first melted men's minds and consciences in the name of a false idea of freedom. Marxist economics would have engineered its own failure in due course, given its evident incapacity to compete in a world dominated by the microchip and digital revolutions. But even after communism was on the wane—indeed, even after its collapse—a kind of Marxist hangover continued in the West, where too many continued to believe that economics rules reality.

John Paul II's role in the collapse of European communism rid his Slavic brethren of that particular political plague, challenged the assumed preeminence of politics and economics in our understanding of history, and taught the world a lesson about the real engine of change: culture.

The Pope's pilgrimages to Poland in June 1979 and to Cuba in January 1998 were the two bookends, so to speak, of his "culture first" strategy of change, which is the public dimension of his longstanding commitment to resist the "pulverization" of the human person (as he put it to de Lubac). In both Poland and Cuba, Communist regimes had held a historically Christian nation in their grip for forty years. In both Poland and Cuba, John Paul addressed that particular political form of human

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pulverization by restoring to a people its authentic history and cultural memory. His message said, in various ways and without ever making reference to the regime then in power, "You are not who they say you are. Here is who you are. You [Poles, Cubans] are 'Polish' [or 'Cuban'] because Christianity was the crucial factor in creating a human reality called 'Poles' [or 'Cubans']. Reclaim that source of your identity, deepen your commitment to it, and you will be free in a way that no worldly power can ever take from you." The results were evident in Poland within fourteen months: a revolution of conscience, launched by John Paul II in June 1979, gave birth in Gdansk to the Solidarity movement, and ten years of nonviolent struggle later, communism was finished. The results have not been as rapid or dramatic in Cuba, but Fidel Castro and those who would continue his style of governance cannot be optimistic about the ultimate outcome.

The crack-up of communism was, like all epic historical moments, the product of the convergence of many things: Marxism's economic inadequacies; the dynamics let loose in east central Europe by the 1975 Helsinki Final Act; the policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher; generational change in the Soviet leadership. But if one wants to understand *why* communism collapsed when it did (in 1989, rather than in 1999, or 2009, or 2019) and *how* it did (without bloodshed, in the main), then one simply must factor into this complex equation John Paul II's revolution of conscience. And in taking account of that, one is inoculated against both the Jacobin-political and Marxist-economic delusions about the dynamics of history. For that epic achievement alone, John Paul II has a serious claim to being considered the emblematic figure of his, and our, times.

Then there was, and is, the sexual revolution, another attempt to redefine the *humanum* in the name of a certain concept of freedom: in this instance, the freedom to pursue the pleasure principle so long as "no one else" (or no one else in whom the state asserts a "compelling interest") gets hurt. World Christianity's early response to the sexual revolution was not impressive. Much of liberal Protestantism simply surrendered to it. And the 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae,* the first major papal attempt to address the implications of the sexual revolution after it had broken out into mainstream Western culture, was a pastoral failure. When John Paul II was elected ten years later, the *Humanae Vitae* episode had contributed to a serious credibility problem for the Church on a host of other, related issues; and, just at the moment when the human wreckage caused by the sexual revolution had begun to cause some second thoughts among its former enthusiasts (especially among women), the Catholic Church, it seemed, had little to contribute to restructuring the argument.

John Paul II's "theology of the body," which he laid out in 130 general audience addresses between 1979 and 1984, is arguably the most creative Christian response to the sexual revolution and its "pulverization" of the human person to be articulated in the twentieth century. Its philosophical core is Wojtyla's claim that what we might call a "Law of the Gift" is built into the very structure of human being-in-the-world. Because of that, self-giving, not self-assertion, is the royal road to human flourishing.

This depth truth of the human condition, which John Paul believed could be demonstrated by a careful analysis of human moral agency, had enormous implications for meeting the challenge of the sexual revolution. Sex, as often experienced in today's sexual free-fire zone, is instinctive and impersonal. But that kind of sex does not rise above the level of animal sexuality, which is also instinctive and impersonal. Sex that is an expression of self-giving love, not a use of the other for temporary gratification, is the only sex worthy of human beings. Chastity, on this analysis, is what John Paul called the "integrity of love," the virtue that makes it possible for one to love another as a *person.* We are made free, Wojtyla argues, so that we can make a free gift of ourselves to others; we are free so that we can love freely, and thus love truly. Genuine freedom—the freedom that disposes of itself in self-giving—is the context of a genuinely humanistic sexual ethic.

The theological core of John Paul's "theology of the body" is his profoundly sacramental apprehension of reality. Our embodiedness as male and female is not an accident of evolutionary biology, he insists. Rather, that embodiedness and the mutuality built into it express some of the deepest truths of the world, and teach us something about the world's Creator. John Paul even goes so far as to propose that sexual love within the bond of marital fidelity is an icon of the interior life of God the Holy Trinity, a community of mutual self-donation and mutual receptivity. Thus sexual love, within the bond of Christian marriage, is an act of worship.

It will be well into the twenty-first century before the Catholic Church, much less the wider culture, even begins to assimilate the contents of John Paul II's theology of the body. A secondary literature capable of unpacking these dense, compact audience addresses is badly needed. But for the moment,

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it is worth noting that the Bishop of Rome, often assumed to be the custodian of a tradition deeply scarred by a Manichean deprecation of human sexuality, has articulated a deeply humanistic response to the sexual revolution that says to the readers of *Playboy* and *Cosmopolitan* alike, "Human sexuality is far greater than you imagine."

In the third place, John Paul's II's radical humanism has helped recast the debate about the future of public life in free societies for the twenty-first century. After a century in which monarchy had collapsed and totalitarianism in its Fascist and Communist forms had been defeated, it seemed at the opening of the 1990s as if democracy and the market were triumphant. If you wanted a society that protected basic human rights while advancing the common good, you chose the participatory politics of democracy; if you wanted economic growth, a higher material standard of living for all, and the widest possible inclusion in what the Editor-in-Chief of this journal has called the "circle of productivity and exchange," you chose a market-oriented, not state-directed, economy. John Paul II shared both of those convictions, as he made clear in the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. But he quickly decoded the new threats to the "mystery of the human person" in the post-Cold War world, and he spent much of the decade of the 1990s trying to explain that freedom detached from moral truth—the "freedom of indifference" that dominated the high culture of the triumphant West—was, inevitably, self-cannibalizing.

Freedom untethered from truth is freedom's worst enemy. For if there is only your truth and my truth, and neither one of us recognizes a transcendent moral standard (call it "*the* truth") by which to adjudicate our differences, then the only way to settle the argument is for you to impose your power on me, or for me to impose my power on you. Freedom untethered from truth leads to chaos; chaos leads to anarchy; and since human beings cannot tolerate anarchy, tyranny as the answer to the human imperative of order is just around the corner. The false humanism of the freedom of indifference leads first to freedom's decay, and then to freedom's demise.

Similarly, on the economic front, unless a vibrant public moral culture disciplines and directs the explosive human energies let loose by the free market, the market ends up destroying the culture that makes it possible. In what Zbigniew Brzezinski nicely described as the "permissive cornucopia" of the future, a society of unprecedented material wealth and equally unprecedented license, the virtues necessary for the market to work—self-command, the willingness to defer gratification, the talent for teamwork, the skill of prudent risk-taking—atrophy. MTV, not the Federal Trade Commission or the International Monetary Fund, is the true enemy of the free economy.

This vision of the free, prosperous, *and virtuous* society, itself a product of the radical humanism of Karol Wojtyla, has not won the day in the developed world. But the proposal is out there. And that proposal is part of the intellectual and moral patrimony of over a billion Roman Catholics, as well as many, many others who find in it the most comprehensive, and compelling vision of public life on offer at the threshold of a new century and a new millennium. That proposal, too, buttresses the claim that Pope John Paul II is the emblematic man of our times.

"Be not afraid!", the antiphon of John Paul's inaugural homily on October 22, 1978, quickly became a kind of motto for the pontificate. That this clarion call to a recovery of courage at the end of the twentieth century was never regarded, even by the Pope's adversaries, as an impossible dream or a sentimental piety tells us a lot about Karol Wojtyla. Milovan Djilas (then a dissident in what was then Yugoslavia) was right when he said that the most impressive thing about the Pope was that he was a man utterly without fear. Courage of that sort explains a good part of the attraction of Karol Wojtyla's radical humanism as a response to the crises of the twentieth century.

It is just as important, however, to underline that this fearlessness is neither Stoic in character nor the by-product of Karol Wojtyla's personal "autonomy." Rather, it is a specifically Christian fearlessness. It was first exemplified for young Karol Wojtyla by his widower-father and by the bishop who ordained him, the man he calls the "unbroken prince," Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha, who led the Church of Krakow through the dark night of the Nazi Occupation. Those experiences of fearlessness have been deepened by Wojtyla's lifelong meditation on the mystery of the Cross, for the Pope is, in his heart, a Carmelite, and St. John of the Cross remains his spiritual master. His Cross-centered gaze on the world and its history precludes any hint of the Panglossian in the Pope's Christian humanism. In it, fear is not displaced, but rather transformed: transformed through a deep personal encounter with the crucified and abandoned Christ, which sets those who experience it free from fear.

That the universality of one's interests, compassion, and concerns is in inverse proportion to the depth of one's particular convictions is one of the truisms of the late twentieth century. By the gen-

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eral reckoning of many of his contemporaries, the intensity of Karol Wojtyla's conviction that the Cross is the truth of the world, and not simply another option in a supermarket of "spiritualities," ought to have made him an impossibly narrow, even dangerous, sectarian. But here, too, Pope John Paul II has been an important, perhaps even decisive, sign of contradiction.

Judged by externals, John Paul II has a claim to papal greatness and to world attention because of the exceptional range of his outreach to those who do not share his deepest convictions: to secular scientists, to Jews, to Muslims, to Christians of other confessions. Yet Wojtyla insists that these encounters (which, in the case of the dialogue with Judaism, are of a sort not seen for more than nineteen hundred years) have come about not despite his Christian faith but because of it. Respectful dialogue with all who are "other" is not in tension with Christian orthodoxy or the papal task of safeguarding the deposit of faith. Respectful encounter and dialogue are what Christian orthodoxy demands.

The Pope himself was eager to make this point at the United Nations in 1995. In a passage that surprised some observers because it invoked what one official in the Vatican Secretariat of State called the "J-word" before an audience of world political leaders, John Paul made sure that everyone present in the General Assembly hall knew that his defense of universal human rights and a genuine humanism for the post-Cold War world was not the result of some generic "spirituality." Defining himself as a "witness to hope," the Pope had this to say about the sources of that hope and its public implications:

> As a Christian, my hope and trust are centered on Jesus Christ, the two thousandth anniversary of whose birth will be celebrated at the coming of the new millennium. . . . *Jesus Christ is for us God made man, and made part of the history of humanity. Precisely for this reason, Christian hope for the world and its future extends to every human person.* Because of the radiant humanity of Christ, nothing genuinely human fails to touch the hearts of Christians. Faith in Christ does not impel us to intolerance. On the contrary, it obliges us to engage in a respectful dialogue. Love of Christ does not distract us from interest in others, but rather invites us to responsibility for them, to the exclusion of no one. . . . Thus as we approach the two thousandth anniversary of the birth of Christ, the Church asks only to be able to propose respectfully this message of salvation, and to be able to promote, in charity and service, the solidarity of the entire human family.

He was standing at the marble rostrum of the UN General Assembly, but he was teaching a basic lesson in Christology. And in doing so, the Pope was calling both Christians and those for whom Christianity is ineluctably "sectarian" because of its insistence on the universal salvific mission of Christ to take seriously the central Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.

It was not the first time John Paul had addressed this issue or suggested that it had important public implications. In *Redemptoris Missio,* his 1990 encyclical on Christian mission, John Paul had taught the orthodox faith of the Church: that many are saved who do not belong to the Church, but that those who are not saved in the Church are nonetheless saved because of Christ. At the same time, and in the same encyclical, John Paul made a decisive break with certain aspects of the Christian past and embraced the method of freedom when he wrote that "*The Church proposes; she imposes nothing*" (emphasis in original). Here was a decisive, historic break with the shadow-side of the Constantinian legacy. The Church, not by a merely prudential calculus but for the weightiest of theological reasons, renounced any use of state power in advancing its mission. A deep respect for every human being's search for the truth and a commitment to the method of persuasion in preaching the gospel were twin, "universal" implications of the radical specificity of the Christian claim embedded in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

And here, too, John Paul II taught the twentieth century something important about the nature of the human person and about genuine humanism. A universal empathy with others comes through, not around, particular convictions. One empirical test of the truth of particular convictions is their capacity to engage empathetically with the "other" in ways that enrich the humanity of all concerned. It was, in the root meaning of the word, a crucial lesson at the end of a century in which "otherness" had too often been seen as a lethal threat, with lethal consequences.

The twentieth century, which witnessed the announcement of the death of God, was in fact a century of the death of the gods. None of the false gods of the twentieth century was able to exorcise the paralyzing fear that first hung like a pall over the opening battles of World War I and then drifted down the decades, blighting the lives and destinies of four generations of human beings. Being on the right side of history didn't expel the demon of fear from the Bolsheviks and their progeny; it gave greater scope to deviltry, from the execution rooms in the Lubyanka

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basement to the frozen wastelands of the Kolyma mines. Racial determinism and its presumption of biological superiority didn't exorcise the passions that informed German National Socialism; the master race, living out its fears, created a new reign of terror from the Atlantic to the Urals. The therapeutic society explained fear away, which worked only for a while, or medicated it, which was another form of the pulverization of the human person.

In the face of the great fear of his time—a fear formed by irrationality and the nihilism that always accompanies the degradation of reason—John Paul II could say, and mean, "Be not afraid!" because he worshiped the one true God, whose conquest of fear he had encountered in God's only-begotten Son.

With the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth, a human being was inextricably taken up into the Godhead. And if, as St. Paul insisted to the Romans, Jesus Christ is the first fruits of God's salvific action in and for the world, then all creation is eschatologically destined to fulfillment within the inner life of God. This truly radical humanism is the most compelling response to the false humanisms that wrought havoc with the twentieth century. Communion with God is the source of the liberation that humanism has sought for centuries.

John Paul himself would insist most vigorously that there are many others who could claim to be the human icon of the twentieth century. This is not simply a question of modesty, for Pope John Paul II knows that the truths he has taught and lived are iconic: they point beyond themselves to the One who is the Truth. Self-giving as the source of genuine human flourishing and the central moral imperative of true humanism is such a truth. This is the gospel, and the Church's raison d'être is to preach it. The Church is the Body of Christ. And thus *the* figure of this century, or any century, is Jesus Christ.

That, Pope John Paul II has insisted since his 1994 announcement of the Great Jubilee of 2000, is what the world's celebration of the turn of the millennium must recognize: that the revelation of God in the incarnate Christ is, at the same time, the revelation of true humanism. FT

Cordelia's Brother

If nothing else happened after the time
When he said he was happy and I said, "No—
Not like you will be, if you marry one
Like your mother, and raise a son like you"—
When the salt stung my eyes and he held my hand
And I kissed his hand and he cried, rejoicing—
If nothing else happened, like the crazed king
I maintain, that alone would redeem all pains.

Craig Payne

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The Holy Feminine

Charlotte Allen

What to do about the female saints? Arriving at an acceptable consensus regarding the holy women of Christianity has been a persistent problem for feminist theologians. The first wave of the women's movement tended to take a disparaging stance toward the nuns, lay spinsters, wives, mothers, queens, widows, repentant courtesans, and martyrs whom the official Church had canonized, deeming them if not downright neurotic, then at the very least the daddy's girls of the religious power structure, rewarded with halos for their passivity and deference to their male betters. In her widely read 1986 book *Alone of All Her Sex*, Marina Warner typically reinterpreted the Virgin Mary as a consummate creature of patriarchy whose incompatible virtues of chastity and maternity could not be imitated by real-life women but could be used as sticks by men for beating them into submission. Nonetheless, Warner, like Henry Adams before her, could not help being overwhelmed by the abundance and sheer beauty of the art, architecture, music, and literature created in the name of the Theotokos over the centuries (it is Notre Dame Cathedral, after all, that still rules Paris), so her book turned out to be only half a polemic against patriarchy. The other half read like a reprise of *The Virgin and the Dynamo*.

Furthermore, women scholars, led by Caroline Walker Bynum, the Columbia University historian (and believing Christian) who is one of the leading medievalists of the late twentieth century, quickly discovered that the female saints and Christian mystics were actually powerful figures who wielded surprising influence over men despite their secondary social status. (Bynum, for example, has demonstrated that it was women who spearheaded the rise of devotion to the Eucharist and other Catholic spiritual practices previously held to have been rammed down the throats of the laity by the male clergy.) We have feminism to thank, and justly so, for the aca-

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demic cottage industry that has grown up around such previously little-known mystics as St. Hildegard of Bingen and the medieval sub-saints Julian of Norwich and Margery Kemp.

Unfortunately, ideology is often the universal solvent in this new blend of feminism and hagiography. Many of the studies portray their female subjects either as postmodern "subversives" intent on undermining all-pervasive male hegemony, or else as adepts in a sort of "women's way of knowing" how to be holy. The assumption behind the latter theory is that male saints tend to focus individualistically on their own spiritual progress, while other-directed females practice charity and identify with social outcasts: Augustine of Hippo versus Dorothy Day.

Teresa of Ávila and the Politics of Sanctity, by Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, a theology professor at Xavier University, is of the subversive school—sad to say, for Ahlgren deeply admires her subject. Teresa (1515-1582), a Spanish Carmelite nun (she took the religious name Teresa de Jesus), monastic reformer, and prolific writer, is one of the best loved of Catholic women saints and possibly the most brilliant, rivaled in intellect only by her fellow Carmelite of this century, the recently canonized Edith Stein. Like Stein, Teresa's well-to-do Castilian family were converts from Judaism—*conversos*—and their lot was not an easy one, as all non-converting Jews had been expelled from Spain only twenty-three years before Teresa's birth, and the *conversos* who stayed behind tended to be objects of unwelcome attention from the Inquisition.

Teresa entered the Carmelite order at about age twenty. In those days, and for several centuries afterwards in the Old and New Worlds, many Spanish convents were essentially pious group homes for the unmarriageable daughters, and those not interested in marriage, of the upper crust. The wealthier nuns lived comfortably (keeping themselves busy with fine needlework and using the convent's poorer nuns as their cooks, gardeners, and housemaids), entertained guests (including men) freely, had access to their own property, and even wore jewelry with their habits.

Teresa was serious about her religious vocation, but she suffered from poor health and was no more than conventionally pious until she was about forty years old, when she had a mystical experience while praying before a statue of Christ. It was the first of many episodes of ecstatic trance, including the mystical piercing of her heart by divine love that the famous Bernini statue memorializes. She started writing about her experiences, turning out hundreds of letters and numerous books, including her own *Vida*, or autobiography. She had no education to speak of—that is to say, she knew no Latin except what she had heard in church—but she wrote in lively demotic Spanish laced with humor and frankness. She began to pray alone for long periods of time, to fast severely, and to wear under her clothing penitential *cilicios*, or "disciplines"—barbed armlets and waistbands that wounded and infected the flesh.

At the same time, Teresa became determined to restore the Carmelite order to its original strict form, the form in which she herself had come to live, in which the nuns embraced poverty and hardship, cloistered themselves from the outside world, and spent long hours daily in mental prayer. Starting in 1562, when she was nearly fifty, she traveled the length and breadth of Spain establishing some seventeen houses of "discalced," or barefoot, Carmelites dedicated to arduous living. It was not an easy task, for the new convents typically lacked the wealthy endowments of their "calced" counterparts, and Teresa and her nuns often lived humbly in fact as well as in spirit. Her influence spread to the male branch of the Carmelite order, which began its own reforms under her mystic contemporary St. John of the Cross. Teresa had a rare gift for combining rigorous asceticism and intense spirituality with rugged practicality, high-spirited determination, and a bottomless reservoir of charm. When she was not rapt in ecstasy in her cell, she was dazzling readers with her writings, or in the convent kitchen cooking for the sisters. *Nuestra santa madre* was the title she bore among male and female admirers alike.

As Ahlgren's admirably researched monograph (her archival sources include the unpublished writings of some of Teresa's nuns) indicates, Teresa was also a controversial figure. The calced Carmelites tried to thwart her reform movement—but her worst problems derived from her status as a mystic, particularly as a female mystic, claiming direct inspiration from God. At the time of her birth, Spain abounded with charismatic holy women, known as *beatas*, some affiliated with religious orders, some lay, who dedicated themselves to lives of prayer, reporting visions and mystical experiences. Many *beatas* became spiritual fixtures of their communities, their homes turning into local shrines visited by men and women alike seeking counsel, and even the *beatas*' own priest-confessors sometimes deferred to them in matters of spiritual guidance.

Official Catholicism has always taken a cautious, even oppositional, stance toward mystical experience and claims of direct divine inspiration, especially in cases where the mystics have insisted that what they learned in their private revelations superseded Church law and authority. Furthermore, some of the *beatas* had aligned themselves with an early six-

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teenth-century Spanish movement later condemned as heresy and known as the *alumbrados* ("enlightened ones"), who viewed themselves, rather like the Gnostics of early Christianity, as a spiritual elite entitled to bypass the sacramental participation and good works required of ordinary believers.

At the same time in Germany and Geneva, Luther and Calvin were averring in a different way that the Church's mediation between the individual Christian and God was largely unnecessary. The Counter-Reformation, whose aim was to stanch such Protestant sentiments, was particularly hard on mystics and encouraged women to enter convents rather than pursue sanctity on their own. As a *conversa*, Teresa was already open to suspicion, and starting in the 1570s, when she was well on in years, her writings became the subject of six separate investigations by the Inquisition, although she was never charged with heresy and her books were not censored. She felt obliged to assure her readers over and over of her loyalty to the Church and its institutions—that "obedience gives strength," as she declared. She often wrote humbly of her "weak nature" that Christ himself had fortified.

However, Ahlgren's analysis of Teresa's writings does not stop with the observation that there was an element of shrewdness as well as sincerity in her disarming openness about the state of her soul. Like many other feminist commentators, Ahlgren makes some perfectly valid points and then overdoes them. In Ahlgren's view, institutional religion, Counter-Reformation Catholicism in particular, is mostly a Feuerbachian superstructure masking and also furthering men's efforts via culture and politics to keep their women in line, to exert "controls . . . over women who aspired to holiness," as Ahlgren writes.

Viewed through Ahlgren's heavily smoked ideological lenses, convents are prisons, humility is no virtue (the Virgin Mary receives the usual feminist drubbing here), and Teresa's protestations of unworthiness and her submission to Church authority were entirely spurious, "rhetorical strategies" aimed at presenting herself as "inoffensive in a time and culture that found esoteric religious experience threatening and that firmly denied that a woman could embody such religious authority."

A little of this heavy-handed reductionism goes a long way, and in the end, Ahlgren's argument is not particularly convincing. She ignores, for example, the male mystic John of the Cross' far more serious troubles with the Inquisition. Furthermore, the supposedly misogynistic Catholic Church started canonization proceedings for Teresa in 1591, a mere five years after her death, and less than thirty years after that—a blink of an eye for the slow-moving Vatican—she had the official status of saint. (Ahlgren maintains that her canonization might have been pushed through in order to boost the tourist business at Ávila, and that Teresa's hagiographers bowdlerized her biography for public consumption—well, maybe.)

John Kitchen's *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender* promises by its title to be yet another dreary ideological dissection of the processes that create female saints. Those ominous postmodern buzzwords "rhetoric" and "gender" are not encouraging, and this densely written, academic jargon-filled monograph reads like the warmed-over doctoral dissertation (from the University of Toronto) that it is. Unlike Ahlgren, who writes gracefully and tries to put Teresa into a cultural context, Kitchen does not bother to provide any background information about his topic, women saints of the Merovingian period. The nonspecialist reader, who may not quite remember who the Merovingians were (the Frankish kings who ruled France and its environs during the three centuries before Charlemagne's era) and to whom such worthies as Dagobert II and Childeric III are not household names, needs more help than Kitchen gives. One has to look elsewhere for even the sketchiest curriculum vitae on St. Radegund (518-587), the Frankish queen and abbess whose two Latin biographies, one written by her friend the poet and bishop Venantius Fortunatus and the other by a nun in her convent named Baudonivia, are the chief subject of Kitchen's book.

Despite all this, Kitchen has written an important book that anyone interested in Christian attitudes toward women should take the trouble to wade through. He takes on, and convincingly refutes, the second school of feminist hagiography mentioned above, the school that views female sanctity as a maternal, people-person alternative to the supposedly preening and asceticism-oriented ideal of male sainthood. Kitchen's book also serves as a useful counterbalance to the subversive school of writing about female saints that Ahlgren's monograph represents. But first, a few words about Radegund herself.

Although she is little known in America, whose Catholicism is culturally Irish, St. Radegund was for many centuries one of the most popular holy women in the European lands where the Franks put their stamp: throughout Central Europe, up into Norman England (where she was a patron saint of Cambridge University's Jesus College), and down into Italy. Daughter of a Thuringian king assassinated by his own brother, she was married at age twelve to the Frankish king Clothar I, some thirty years her senior, after the latter raided Thuringia, kidnapped her, and carried her back to France as part of the booty.

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Such shockingly early, essentially forced, marriages to much older husbands, as well as bloody internecine combat with women as the war-prizes, were ordinary occurrences in the lives of the semi-barbarian Northern European royalty. Some of the cradle-robbing kings were nominally Christian (Clothar's father, Clovis I, had been baptized a Catholic only a generation earlier), but like many a present-day celebrity, they flouted the Church's marriage laws and practiced polygamy, serial and otherwise, just as they had done in pagan times, sowing putative heirs like winter wheat on the northern soil. (Radegund's nuns would later include the legitimate and illegitimate offspring of more than one Frankish pretender.)

Radegund was one of at least seven wives and steady concubines in Clothar's household over the years, and she may well not have been the only woman he called wife during their union. She put up with Clothar, who taunted her for her childlessness and was repeatedly unfaithful to her despite her fairy-tale princess beauty. She devoted herself to the Church, to which she had recently converted, and to the poor, who idolized her. According to her biographers, she dedicated herself to securing freedom for prisoners (one need only imagine the conditions in medieval jails), and she founded a leprosy hospital where she herself often changed the lepers' dressings and kissed their sores.

Radegund finally left her husband after he murdered her brother. She took the veil over Clothar's ferocious opposition, which included the intimidation of several bishops (when one prelate demurred at consecrating her, she put on a habit, strode up to the altar, and dared him not to make her a nun) and a failed abduction aimed at returning her to court. She finally succeeded in establishing her own monastery at Poitiers (paid for by a repentant Clothar), one of the first "double," or mixed-sex religious houses in which men as well as women reported to her as abbess. The rule that Radegund adopted for her nuns required them to learn Latin and to spend at least two hours a day in study. Although the convent was strictly "enclosed"—shut off from the outside world, including most visitors—Venantius Fortunatus corresponded regularly in Latin verse with Radegund and another nun and sent them flowers.

At the same time, Radegund was having intense mystical experiences in her cell and was subjecting herself to a series of fleshly mortifications so violent and so subliminally erotic—binding her body with chains and branding her breasts with a red-hot brass plate bearing an image of Christ—that, as Kitchen points out, most modern-day hagiographers delicately skip over the details. She took on the lowliest chores in the convent, cleaning the privy and shining the sisters' shoes, and she personally fed, bathed, and handed out new clothes to the hordes of beggars who were fixtures at every medieval monastery.

The parallels between Radegund's saintly career as narrated by her Dark Age admirers and Teresa's as narrated by herself and her contemporaries a thousand years later are striking: the urbane literacy, the authority over men, the mystical experiences, the severe penances, the lowly tasks cheerfully performed, the commitment to a most austere form of female religious life—even the survival of both saints to ripe old ages for their times, as though their holiness was good for their health. Both were associated with numerous reported miracles during their lives and after death.

Although Teresa is obviously not in Kitchen's Merovingian purview, this similarity of saintly phenotype is his very point. In Kitchen's view, there is no such thing as "a distinctive female sanctity." For the early medieval hagiographers he writes about, there was but one form of sanctity; it demanded nearly impossible heroism; and for that reason, it was defined as male. In a culture in which there was only one "feminine" role for a high-born woman—contracting or being contracted into a dynastically advantageous marriage and then breeding heirs—becoming a saint meant in some sense becoming a man. By turning away from the conventionally feminine—leaving one's husband or parents, cutting one's hair short, putting aside fine clothes and jewelry, giving oneself over to fasting, prayers, chastity, and physical hardship—the saint, much like the spinster-suffragette of the early twentieth century, bought herself freedom and spiritual power, even to the point of miracle-working. "The living holy woman gains a reputation as a healer," writes Kitchen of a Merovingian biography of St. Monegund, another Frankish woman, who broke off sexual relations with her husband to live as a hermit.

The life of severe self-denial that her contemporary Radegund chose, and the self-torture that seems bizarre by today's standards, had a purpose: enabling the saint to achieve martyrdom in an age without religious persecution, and thus to imitate Christ. A female ascetic could be, and was, the equal of any male ascetic. Not surprisingly, folk legends abounded in ancient and medieval times of women who went so far as to disguise themselves as men and enter male monasteries in their quest for holiness (the medieval tale of Pope Joan is a variant on these stories). "Becoming a man leads to power," Kitchen observes of the virgin Papula, said to have donned male attire

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and fled to a monastery to escape her worldly parents, to have been chosen as abbot over the men, and to have worked miracles from her tomb after her death (when her true sex was at last discovered).

Nor was this view of the female saint as "virago," or man-like woman, merely a fancy of misogynistic male hagiographers who could not believe that a real woman could be holy (Gillian Ahlgren's explanation for why men canonized Teresa). It was part of women saints' own self-conception. Kitchen traces the prototype for Radegund's model of sanctity—and by extension Teresa's—back to the third-century North African martyr Perpetua, who wrote a vivid autobiographical narrative before being thrown to wild animals in the arena at the age of twenty-two.

In it she described a vision in which she turned into a male athlete who defeated an opponent in a wrestling match, a prefiguration of her victory over evil by her death. Perpetua was not a masculinized woman (she agonized over being separated from her baby son while in prison), but in bearing witness to her faith she had to reject—at great emotional cost—a normal maternal life. Indeed, one may find the template for such radicalism in the New Testament itself, in Luke's Gospel, where Jesus declares that Mary of Bethany, who forsakes housework to sit at his feet, "has chosen the better part," in contrast to her house-busy sister Martha.

Furthermore, as Kitchen points out, just as the "male" virtue of heroic asceticism was expected of saints of both sexes, medieval hagiographers also expected both sexes to practice to the extreme the supposedly "female" virtue of charity. One of the favorite stories of the Middle Ages, he notes, was that of St. Martin cutting his cloak in half with his sword so he could share it with a shivering beggar. Both of Radegund's biographers, the male Fortunatus and the female Baudonivia, celebrated the saint's rigorous monasticism as inseparable from her social activism (Fortunatus called her a "Martha," while Baudonivia called her a "Mary"), and later medieval writers regarded the two treatments of Radegund's life as complementary, not rival, presentations. It is not surprising that this glamorous, fervent, and by all accounts unyielding sixth-century woman galvanized the European imagination for so long. (It is worth noting that the twentieth-century martyr Franz Jaegerstaetter, guillotined in 1943 as the only Austrian who refused to serve in Hitler's army, came from a village called St. Radegund.)

Patricia Ranft's *Women and Spiritual Equality in Christian Tradition* explores these same themes more fully and on a broader canvas. Ranft, a professor of history at Central Michigan University and author of several well-regarded works on medieval women's spirituality, in this book presents a sophisticated and highly readable survey, pitched to nonscholars, of female holiness from New Testament times to the Enlightenment. Her overriding theme is simple: she started experiencing "frustration" at reading over and over in feminist scholarship that "Christianity was at its core misogynist" and that "because it was so influential in shaping Western ideas, Christianity was largely responsible for Western misogynism." She grants that there have been strains of Christian theology that have deemed women to be men's inferiors, and that institutional Christianity has often all too readily accepted prevailing norms of women's social subordination, but in the spiritual realm, Christian women were never inferior. The same commandments—of fidelity and devotedness in marriage, for example—bound both sexes, and both sexes were told they would share body and soul in the resurrection of Christ.

While there is no record that women held high office in the early Church, they constituted an independent source of religious authority by virtue of their sheer pious energy, as the apostle Paul's evident respect for his benefactresses makes clear. When it came to the courage that made martyrs, women (as well as slaves, children, the elderly, and others regarded as weak) were often at the forefront, turning conventional hierarchies upside down and striking awe in male hearts. The story of Perpetua's martyrdom, and that of her slave Felicitas, who had given birth only two days before joining her mistress arm in arm on the bloody sand of the circus floor, was read aloud in North African churches along with the Gospels, Ranft notes. The cloistered nuns and anchoritesses of the Middle Ages, far from being the prisoners of male control that feminists often make of them, actively sought out silence and seclusion so they could pray, and also so they could have a respite from the adulation of the local folk, who typically regarded lady hermits as celebrities, like the *beatas* of Teresa's day. "How seldom nowadays will you find a recluse alone," the twelfth-century abbot Aelred of Rievaulx observed. "At her window will be seated some garrulous old gossip pouring idle tales into her ears."

What is remarkable about the tough-minded embodiment of female sanctity that Ranft delineates, persisting from the martyrs to Teresa of Ávila and beyond, is its consistency over the centuries: a useful corrective to the currently fashionable notion that religions constantly change with the culture around them. Another immensely readable book, *Women in the Days of the Cathedrals*, a reissue of

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a study of eleventh-century France by the recently deceased French medieval archivist Regine Pernoud, suggests that the high spiritual regard in which Christianity held women eventually spilled over into secular life.

Thanks to a centuries-long spell of mild weather and such productivity-enhancing innovations as the horse plow and the water mill, the first two centuries of this millennium were a time of burgeoning rural prosperity in Western Europe, and women, eased of much back-breaking toil, were the chief beneficiaries. A third medieval invention, the indoor chimney, made the hearth the center of the home and the housewife who presided over it a queen, holding court amid her huge array of household implements and bathtubs (contrary to stereotype, medievals loved to bathe).

In the towns, women who lacked husbands for one reason or other carried on such "male" occupations as furrier, glovemaker, button-maker (buttons were another medieval invention), bookbinder, candlemaker, innkeeper, barber (which meant that they practiced medicine), and even moneylender—and the records show that they paid taxes at the same rates as their male counterparts. In the food trades, including baking, sausage and cheese-making, beer-brewing, and poultry-vending, women entrepreneurs outnumbered men. Medieval Frenchwomen entered into contracts, made wills, administered estates, and to a large extent controlled their own property. They devised haute couture: sexy clothes cut close to the body and headdresses and hairstyles that went in and out of fashion with the seasons. At the convents, which operated girls' (and sometimes boys') schools, large numbers of upper and middle-class young women learned to read and thereby became an avid market for a torrent of devotional literature in Latin and the vernacular languages.

The dawn of the modern era actually saw a decline in women's fortunes and legal standing. Pernoud pinpoints the devolution as beginning with the rise of the university, which was barred to females and which supplanted the monastery (and the convent) as the locus of higher learning. Scholasticism, the philosophy of the universities, promulgated Aristotle's doctrine that women were intellectually and morally less competent than men, giving rise to a late-medieval genre of mocking antifeminist literature, about which Christine de Pisan (who had to rely on her father's tutoring for her fine education) complained in 1400: "The lies and many other grievances / That each day [women] receive from these disloyal men / Who blame, slander, and deceive them."

Later, the Protestant Reformers shut down the convents altogether where they could and ordered the nuns to marry. Luther maintained that a woman who vows herself to virginity "blasphemes and despises God," and he himself took to wife a former nun, Katherine von Bora. While the Protestants did exalt Christian marriage, which the Catholics had tended to neglect as a source of holiness, the Reformers' arrangements relegated women strictly to the home, where the husband or father did not have to share his authority with the confessor, the bishop, or the mother superior.

Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-1678), the highly intelligent, artistically gifted, and deeply religious Dutch Reformed (until she joined a charismatic sect) woman who in 1638 published the tract *Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated*, was an anomaly in her time, as was the very idea of a woman learning Latin, the language in which she wrote. Schurman was lucky: She was tutored alongside her brothers in the classical authors; her learning, poetry, and musical talent early on caught the attention of queens and leading male intellectuals (including Descartes); and she got herself admitted to the Utrecht guild of painters in 1643. She had concluded that while marriage and domestic life were proper vocations for some of her sex, "an unmarried woman" of means and leisure "can and ought to have time for . . . the study of letters," but until the nineteenth century there were few who agreed with her.

Post-Reformation Catholicism retained its convents and its distinctive tradition of female spirituality, but as Patricia Ranft points out, it was a tradition whose currency became devalued as the reigning culture became more secular. "In a religious society one's religious status is the most significant status," while "in a secular society one's religious status is often the least significant status." It is a long walk from Baudonivia of the Dark Ages, learned in Latin, to Teresa of the Age of Humanism, who knew almost none. Indeed, Anna Maria van Schurman had a Catholic counterpart, the Mexican nun Juana Inès de la Cruz (1651-1695), who amassed immense erudition outside the university (to the point that her bishop reprimanded her), wrote mystical poetry, and argued spiritedly and in vain for the higher education of her sex. A century later, Montesquieu could declare without dissent from his fellow philosophes: "Reason is never found among those with beauty."

Nonetheless, the later Middle Ages and the centuries that followed continued to produce women of extraordinary mystical experience who exerted astonishing spiritual authority on the order of Teresa. Increasingly, they were to be found outside of

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convents, like the *beatas* of Spain, or only loosely connected to religious orders. Mechthild of Magdeburg (1208-c.1294) was a Beguine whose *Flowing Light of the Godhead*, originally written in German, is a richly imagined mystical recapitulation, much like some of Teresa's writings, of the lived experience of God's intense love for the human soul. The Beguines were lay women, mostly in Northern Europe, who took vows of virginity and lived in communal houses that enjoyed papal protection for a time but were eventually dissolved for being inadequately supervised by the Church. Mechthild ended her long life of contemplative solitude somewhat ill at ease in a Cistercian convent whose nuns had far more formal learning than she.

St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), whose biography by Giuliana Cavallini, O.P., editor of a critical edition of her writings and director of the Centro Nazionale di Studi Cateriniani in Rome, is an authoritative introduction to this increasingly popular saint, never quite became a nun. Catherine, one of twenty-five children born to her astoundingly fertile mother, Lapa dé Piagenti (she and her twin sister were the second youngest), refused to marry, to the consternation of her parents. Although having begun at age four a lifelong series of visions of Jesus and having made a vow of perpetual virginity at seven, she became only a lay member of the Order of Preachers. That meant she wore the Dominican habit but continued to live at home with her family.

It was a horrible time. The Black Death had reduced Europe's population by two-thirds during Catherine's infancy, the Hundred Years' War was tearing apart France, factional warfare raged through the Italian city-states, and the papacy had decamped from Rome to Avignon, discrediting and demoralizing the Church. Nonetheless, starting in her late teens, Catherine began a lifetime of traveling around Italy nursing the sick and plague-stricken, mediating family and political disputes, attracting a ragtag entourage of male and female followers (including an English monk), and through a series of impassioned letters (among more than three hundred that survive) succeeding in persuading Pope Gregory IX to bring the papacy back to Rome.

Finally, St. Joan of Arc (1412-1431). In their recently translated biography *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, authors Regine Pernoud and Marie-Veronique Clin extrapolate from the thorough fifteenth-century documentation of her short life to develop the story of this quintessential lay mystic. (She was also, by the way, a quintessential example of John Kitchen's gender-crossing theory of sanctity, cutting her hair short, wearing men's clothes, probably to discourage sexual overtures, and becoming in the process "the most famous cross-dresser of all time," as Florence King has observed.)

A barely literate peasant girl from Lorraine, Joan began to hear "voices" at the age of thirteen that she attributed to God and the saints; at age seventeen she led a French army whose exploits helped end the Hundred Years' War; and at age nineteen she was burned at the stake after a heresy trial engineered by the occupying English that was a legal travesty by anyone's standards. The transcripts from that trial are still extant, and they reveal that Joan, although denied a lawyer in contravention of procedural rules and forced to wear leg irons throughout, held her own quite capably against a panel of forty-four clerical inquisitors, mostly from the faculty of the University of Paris. Twenty-five years later a second trial ordered by Pope Nicholas V nullified the verdict, and by then Joan was already a national heroine, celebrated in poetry by both Christine de Pisan and François Villon. This new translation of the Pernoud-Clin biography of Joan, by Jeremy Duquesnay Adams, a history professor at Southern Methodist University, includes maps, a glossary of characters, and a detailed chronology, and is to be recommended highly.

In *Women and Spiritual Equality*, Patricia Ranft observes that a medieval peasant woman going to Notre Dame Cathedral at Chartres to celebrate the feast of the Annunciation would have found herself surrounded by art, music, and sermonizing that "focused on the spiritual perfection of one creature, a woman." *Roses, Fountain, and Gold*, a survey of Marian art, literature, and apparitions through the ages by John Martin, a Catholic poet, ought to be the book that brings home the fact that the saint the Christian church chose to glorify above all others was that woman, Mary of Nazareth. Unfortunately, Martin's effort is marred by far too breezy diction (calling the Battle of Lepanto "the Don John-Ali Pasha free-for-all," for example) and many too many apparitions of a dubious, even crackpot nature. When we read at the end of the book that Mary warned an Irishwoman in 1988 that the Maastricht Treaty would be the work of the Antichrist, the Church's institutional skepticism toward the outpourings of female visionaries can seem dishearteningly warranted. Martin needs a little more authorial distance from his subjects.

What this array of books tells us is that the women whom Christianity has honored as saints, no matter what age they lived in, have never been the teachers' pets of patriarchy as has been fashionably supposed. From New Testament days to our own age, which has already informally canonized Dorothy Day

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and Mother Teresa, the life of Christian holiness has always been a profoundly countercultural life, requiring its practitioners, male and female, to stand up against prevailing mores, temporal rulers, and even misguided or malevolent Church authorities. Women saints in particular have often had to reject the ordinary comforts of being a woman in order to bear their particular witness. Their extraordinary heroism is something that ideological feminists such as Gillian Ahlgren, moderate feminists such as Patricia Ranft, and out-and-out traditionalists such as John Martin can join ranks in praising. FT

Treacherous Driving

"It's as safe as traveling to work."
a cardiologist before performing a transplant

The first night of the blizzard
that stranger inched into Ohio.
Halfway through he skidded
into our snow-spackled lives.
His heart is buried
in my father,
who is buried.

This is the hole
in the stranger, in my father,
in my own cracked
chest, hail cupped in its cavity,
the aorta beginning to freeze.

All winter,
the weather preaches white
lies: fields blank of roads,
a curve straightened,
the even light of sky.

Tonight the breeze is all
icicles, bannerlike
from the clouds. Nothing
is moveable
in this treacherous state.

Our wheels spin,
their rhythm: a breath
that pulls us
then stalls. The law

of the body, of the state,
cannot replace the chain
reaction, jackknifed lives,
hope piling into hope.

The man and his heart,
cold on an icy road,
warmed us for weeks
while winter, a clear blue thing,
wafted light.

Marjorie Maddox

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Books In Review

Hauerwas v. Hauerwas v. Hauerwas

Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified. By Stanley Hauerwas. *Abingdon. 272 pp. $25.*

***Reviewed by* J. Budziszewski**

In one sense this is a postmodern book. I don't mean precisely that it propounds postmodernism, but rather that it is the kind of thing one would expect all books to be if postmodernism, despite itself, were true. For postmodernists, says Stanley Hauerwas, there is no such thing as an author who retains his identity beneath his changing masks; signs like "author" and "self" merely "name our attempt . . . to name the play of the languages that speak through us." And that is something like what one finds in *Sanctify Them in the Truth*: Not one Hauerwas, but a succession of Hauerwases, different every few pages, sometimes different on the same page. "I do not write to encourage anyone ever to think that they 'have gotten Hauerwas,'" says one of them (I don't know which, but he speaks on page seven). "I write to make those who read me work at least as hard as I have worked."

In this he has succeeded. There are just too many of him; I cannot make him say where he stands. At least one of him would chide me for even trying, as I know because he chides himself in the same way. After criticizing another writer for lacking confidence in the modern "self" but providing no alternative, he remarks, "I worry that my attempt to make [him] say where he stands is itself a modernist stance."

But that cannot be the end of the story. After all, the Hauerwases of other chapters make other writers say where they stand—Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Wesley. Besides, the Hauerwas of one chapter says there is such a thing as personal agency (and in that sense, apparently, a "self") after all. He defines agency retrospectively rather than prospectively, as the set of skills by which "we" make "our" past our own. Well, then: If "they," the Hauerwases, cannot be blamed for trying to make "their" past their own, then neither can I. In trying to make them all part of the same story, I am only being faithful to the standards that constitute the practice of criticism.

It is just that I cannot do it. I can make them part of the same story, all right, but there is a knot in the plotline that cannot be untied unless at least one of the Hauerwases gives in.

The three Hauerwases who figure most prominently in the narrative I will call Messrs. A, B, and C. Mr. A is a historicist, but not a relativist. I like him and am greatly in his debt for what I have learned from him. It is not an egoistic intrusion for me to say so, because according to Mr. A one never fully understands something until he has imagined what difference it makes in his own life. My life is shaped largely by trying to come to terms with what the New Testament calls the "law written on the heart" and philosophers call the "natural law"—something that might not be thought to lend itself to description in historical terms at all, because it is the same for everyone in every time and place, its core consisting of foundational moral principles we *can't not know*. As a natural lawyer, I approach life with the assumption that although what we call sin is plainly factual, what we call moral ignorance is rarely what it appears to be; the heart conceals its own inscription.

How would Mr. A converse with a natural lawyer? Though not quite convinced by the idea of natural law himself, he is sympathetic to it. Even so he would remind us that what we can't not know must be mediated to us by tradition. If we can't not know it (I may ask), then why must it be mediated to us? Mr. A would answer the question with another: Have I not confessed that knowledge comes in many kinds and levels? Why, yes. Have I not in fact insisted that it can be not only acknowledged but also denied, not only grasped but yet left in pieces? Yes, indeed. Then do you not see (he would continue) that a man needs to be *told* what he already knows even to know that he knows it—that he needs to be *practiced* in what he knows even in order to appropriate it?

And if that is so, then see what follows. The stories and ritual performances that more or less adequately explain to a man what he already knows, and that more or less adequately rehearse him in his own nature, are anything but redundant. They make a difference we might never have dreamt from the bare formula "written on the heart." To be sure, they do not matter in the same way they would if there were nothing written there, for in such a world tradition would be all there is. But they do not matter less, only differently.

Of course I might protest that, in their way, natural lawyers have known these things all along. Like Alasdair MacIntyre, Mr. A has retold in the lingo of "narratives" and "traditions" what the earlier thinkers had already explained in the lingo of "habituations" and "connaturality." Indeed, Mr. A admits as much himself, calling theology and philosophy disciplines in which there is "nothing new to learn" because all of the "data" are in; the problem, he says, is not to get more but to understand what we have got. Viewed that way, Mr. A performs a service just by bringing the background into the foreground and

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pushing the foreground into the background. The lighting is all rearranged, so we see old things as though they were new.

MR. B IS A METHODIST preacher of the old school. At once both "evangelical" and "Catholic," he not only "stake[s] out strong positions" but takes responsibility for them. Defining preaching as "proclamation" of truths that may be just as "painful" for the preacher as for the congregation, he nevertheless declares that the Church "stands joyfully under the authority of the Word," adding that the creeds are "normative boundaries" for Christian reflection on the high matters they address.

Most distinctive about Mr. B is his insistence on a trio of denials. First, he denies that Christianity is a generalized account of things that can be understood apart from the story of the call of Israel and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The aim of Mr. B is to write about Christian ethics in a way that would be "unintelligible" if these things did not happen or if the God of Jesus did not exist. Second, he denies that Christian doctrine is "head knowledge" dissociated from the way people actually live in the community that God has called into being. If a doctrine like the Trinity or the Incarnation has no purchase on things like whom we sleep with or how we make our money, then Mr. B says we do not understand it. Third, he denies that bodily actions can be "spiritualized"—subjected to "infinite redescription"—as though they had no meanings besides those we give them. Although the stories that shape us are inexhaustible and can be told in different ways, that does not mean that we can tell them in any way we please. If I try to tell the story in such a way that lust is "love" or the piling up of wealth is "to the glory of God," then I am lying.

Mr. B gets along well with Mr. A and makes good use of his teachings. In the first place it turns out that what we can't not know is truly and adequately mediated to us not by just any tradition, but by the very Word of God; the narrative of God's dealings with His people is the sole context in which the writing on the heart makes perfect sense. In the second place it turns out that the sacred story itself must be mediated; it becomes real to us as it is heard in the lectionary, enacted in the liturgy, and embodied in ethical practices like Christian marriage. The hope of the Church is to come to live again like peasant Catholics, our bodies shaped and our habits determined "in such a way that the worship of God is unavoidable."

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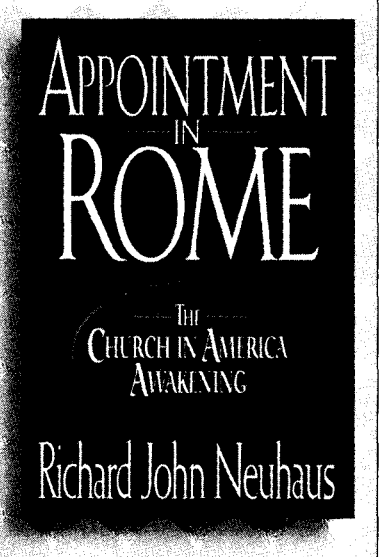

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AT LAST WE COME to Mr. C, whose relation to Messrs. A and B is most charitably described as that of an "evil triplet." What makes Mr. C possible is that the most striking formulations of Messrs. A and B are not merely vigorous but equivocal. They can be read in the way I have been describing, but they can also be read in a radically different way.

For example, the book does not actually say that we do not fully understand doctrine until it is embodied in the practices of the Church (the view I attribute to Mr. B). Rather it offers the more elusive remark that doctrine cannot be "separated" from the practices of the Church. This idea can be taken to mean that doctrine has no meaning until it is embodied in the practices of the Church, and that turns out to be the meaning Mr. C prefers. As if that were not enough, the idea is further radicalized by his claim that the only way to identify the practices of "the Church" is to see what goes on in "actual churches." The remark sounds innocent, even tautologous, until one realizes that Mr. C explains neither

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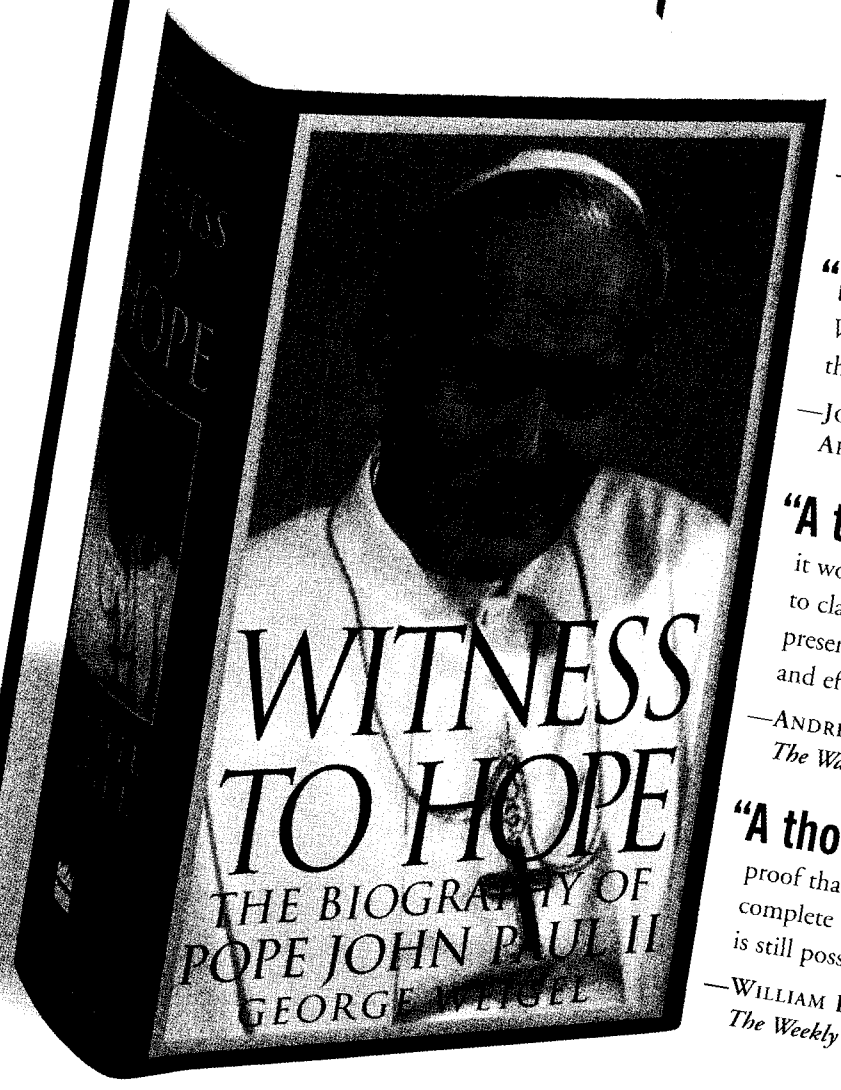

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how to know when a practice has been perverted, nor how to tell what counts as church. The problem is not that he is an evangelical Catholic, but that he is neither evangelical nor Catholic.

The upshot of this sort of thing is that although Mr. C seems to resemble Messrs. A and B, and even reminds us of what they say, he actually takes back everything they teach. Rather than standing joyfully under the authority of Scripture, he relativizes it; rather than rejecting infinite redescription, he practices it; perhaps most surprising of all, rather than emphasizing the embodiment of Christian practices, he ignores the body altogether. That is "spiritualizing" with a vengeance.

ALL THREE TENDENCIES come to a head in Mr. C's discussion of homosexuality. Pivotal to the discussion is a second-hand story about some friends of a friend who are said to be sexually active lesbians. Mr. C posits that they are "virtuous" and "committed" Roman Catholics, but of course that massively begs the question. In a footnote he admits that their description as good Catholics "must be complex," but "ask[s] in the name of charity that their story be accepted in good faith." This merely compounds the fallacy. Charity can ground an appeal for mercy toward sin, but it cannot ground an appeal not to regard something as sinful.

As to the problem of relativizing Scripture, Mr. C alludes to the orthodox hermeneutical principle that "the more obscure texts should be read in the light of the less obscure" but gives it a decidedly unorthodox meaning. The two "texts" he has in mind are evidently what St. Paul says to the early church in Rome, and what the two lesbians say to his friend's church in North Carolina. Mr. C would have us understand that when Paul says "no" his meaning is obscure, but when the lesbians say "yes" their meaning is plain. The upshot is that Scripture stands under the authority of what we do, rather than what we do standing under the authority of Scripture.

As to the problem of infinite redescription, Mr. C hopes that we can make "disagreement" less "intractable" by engaging in a "thick description" of the Christian life, its virtues, and the practices which these virtues make intelligible. If he supposes that disagreements over competing thick descriptions will be less intractable than disagreements over whether Paul's "no" means no, I think he will be disappointed. In the end he does not provide a thick description of homosexual relations anyway, but only a thin analogy, complaining that "I do not see why we cannot view" gay link-ups as something like marriage.

The tradition, of course, provides several reasons why. In the first place, conjugal union is achieved through the complementarity of the man and woman, not their sameness—the sexual reinforcement of identicals merely unhinges them. In the second place, conjugal sex cooperates with the fertility of our bodies rather than opposing it. Mr. C completely ignores the former point. The second he sidesteps, on grounds that procreation is merely a special case of the Church's duty of hospitality to strangers. The best commentary on this point comes from a Christian mother who, upon hearing it, instantly exclaimed, "But babies aren't strangers!" Just so.

AS TO THE PROBLEM of spiritualizing, it is enough to say that only with the greatest reluctance does Mr. C admit that homosexuality has anything to do with sex at all; for precisely this reason he does not even like the term "homosexuality." Preferring to speak of the practice of marriage as though it were ungendered, he would have us think of husbands and wives as just "friends." Let's face it: Not every kind of friendship is improved by being sexualized, and the "friendship" of sexual polar opposites is unique. If Mr. C cannot grasp that point, I would like him to try a "thick description" of what emergency room doctors have to do when they treat homosexuals for doing things that manifestly violate their bodily design. He might also read the footnote in which Messrs. A and B compliment

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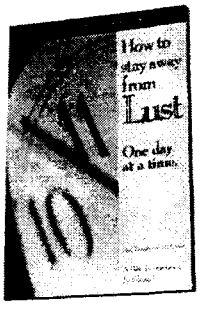

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Pamela Hall for her insight that, in the narrative of Scripture, Thomas Aquinas finds "a history of what happens to human beings when they thwart the teleology of their natures."

The best thing that could happen would be for Messrs. A and B to get together and convert Mr. C. I don't know what would happen in the story next, but I think it might be spectacular.

The Catholic Luther

Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther. Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson. *Eerdmans. 192 pp. $21 paper.*

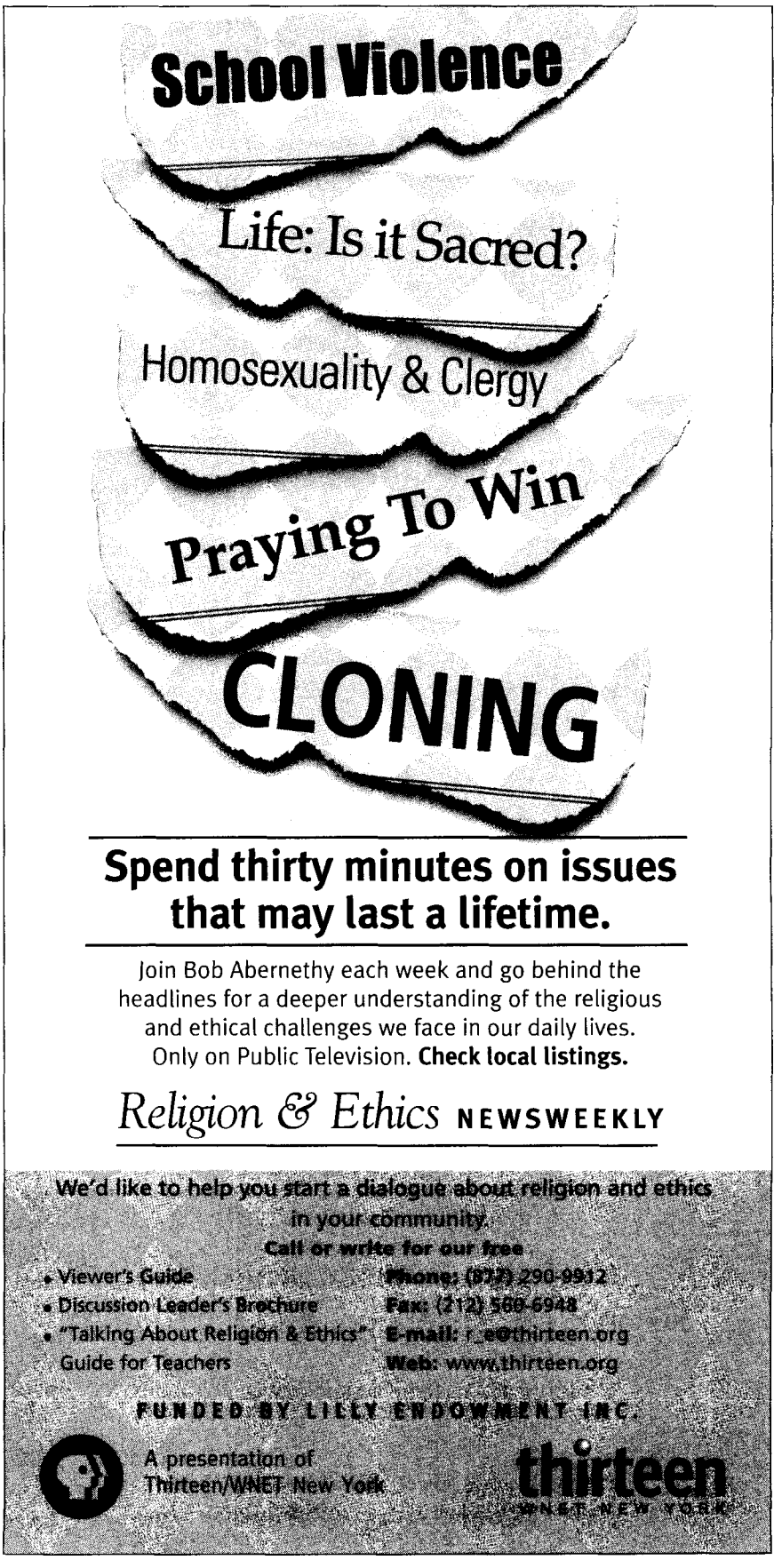
***Reviewed by* Ted Dorman**

This brief but rich book introduces English-speaking scholars to groundbreaking research from Helsinki University that casts Martin Luther's soteriology in a new light. The "new Finnish interpretation of Luther" finds the essence of his doctrine of salvation not in forensic justification—God *declaring* us just solely by virtue of Christ's sacrifice—but in something more akin to the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis*, or deification.

Dr. Tuomo Mannermaa has spearheaded the Finnish Luther research project for more than twenty years. In this volume he is joined by four of his colleagues (Simo Puera, Antti Raunio, Sammeli Juntunen, and Risto Saarinen) in distilling the fruits of their labors in seven essays. The editors of *Union With Christ* contribute a preface, and responses are included from Robert Jenson, Carl Braaten, William Lazareth, and Dennis Bielfeldt.

Mannermaa expounds the book's

Ted Dorman *is Professor of Biblical Studies at Taylor University and author of* A Faith for All Seasons: Historic Christian Belief in Its Classical Expression *(Broadman & Holman).*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thesis as follows: "According to Luther, Christ (in both his person and his work) is present in faith and is through this presence identical with the righteousness of faith. The idea of a divine life in Christ who is really present in faith lies at the very center of the theology of the Reformer." The forensic element in Luther's doctrine of justification is thus viewed by the Finns as a function of his central emphasis on the believer's *actual participation in the divine life* through union with Christ.

This in turn means, in the words of the book's editors, that for Luther "righteousness as an attribute of God in Christ cannot be separated from his divine being. The righteousness of God that is ours by faith is therefore a real participation in the life of God." To ascribe such views to the German Reformer flies in the face of the German Protestant tradition, which has "notoriously read Luther under the spell of neo-Kantian presuppositions" that ignore "all ontology found in Luther" and instead define faith as "purely an act of the will with no ontological implications [such as the believer's actual participation in the divine nature]."

Mannermaa cites the German philosopher Hermann Lotze as one such neo-Kantian culprit whose ontology denies the idea of "being in itself" in favor of the notion of things "standing in relationship" and having no real existence apart from the effects they have on each other. An epistemological corollary of Lotze's ontology is that "things in themselves cannot be objects of human understanding, but only their effects." Lotze's approach places an epistemological gap between knowledge of Christ's *person* (object, being) and of his *work* (effects).

Luther, on the other hand, "does not distinguish between the person and work of Christ. Christ is both *favor* of God (forgiveness of sins, atonement, abolition of wrath) and gift (*donum*)." Faith means "justification precisely on the basis of Christ's person being present in it as favor and gift."

The fact that "favor" and "gift" are inextricably connected means, as Puera's essay notes, that the "gift" of spiritual renewal in Christ "is not only a *consequence* of grace [favor], as is usually emphasized in Lutheran theology, but it is in a certain sense a *condition for* grace as well" (emphasis added). This notion of conditional grace (as opposed to modern Lutheran and Reformed emphasis on unconditional grace) springs from Luther's rejection of late Scholasticism's concept of "created grace." Whereas Scholasticism defined grace as "a quality, an accident adhering to the human being considered as substance," Luther sided with the interpretation of Peter Lombard, "who claimed that the Holy Ghost himself is the love (*caritas*) of a Christian." In this way Luther "does not separate God's essential nature ontologically from the divine attributes effecting salvation."

LUTHER'S REJECTION of both Scholastic and Enlightenment dualisms leads Mannermaa to place him alongside the "classical realist epistemology" of Thomas Aquinas, who taught that "the Being of the known thing itself is present in the knower" and that "knowing and that which is known are identical." This leads Mannermaa to conclude: "Whatever Luther's stance on nominalism may be, in his theology, at least, he follows this classical [realist] epistemology quite explicitly from beginning to end."

Since for Luther "Christ . . . is present in faith and is through this presence identical with the righteousness of faith," it follows that the first commandment of the decalogue demands "trust and faith solely in the Trinity." This is because for Luther, "To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart." Puera therefore concludes that "the requirement to believe in God . . . is basically the same as the commandment to love God purely."

Raunio's essay on "Natural Law and Faith" in Luther's thought moves from the idea of loving God to loving one's neighbor. Here Raunio combats what he calls the "common dualistic interpretation of Luther's understanding of natural law," which makes a distinction between "worldly natur-

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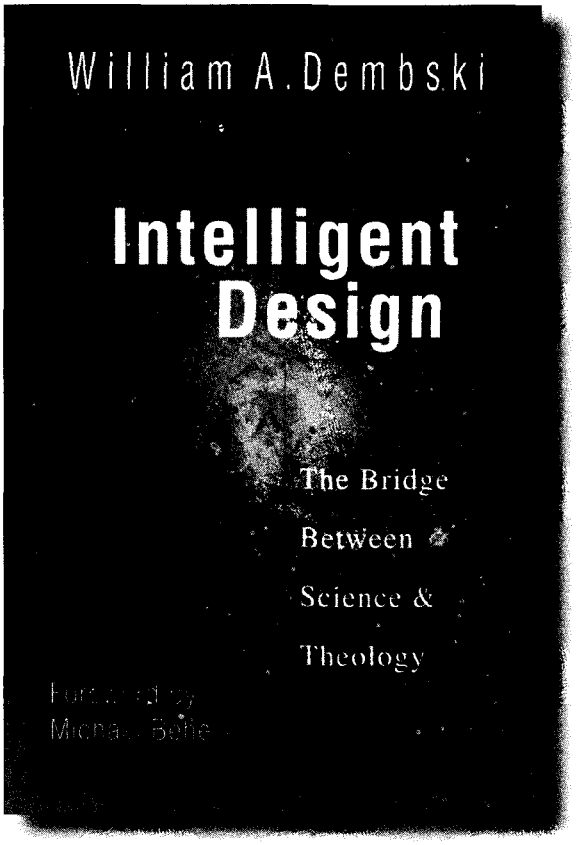

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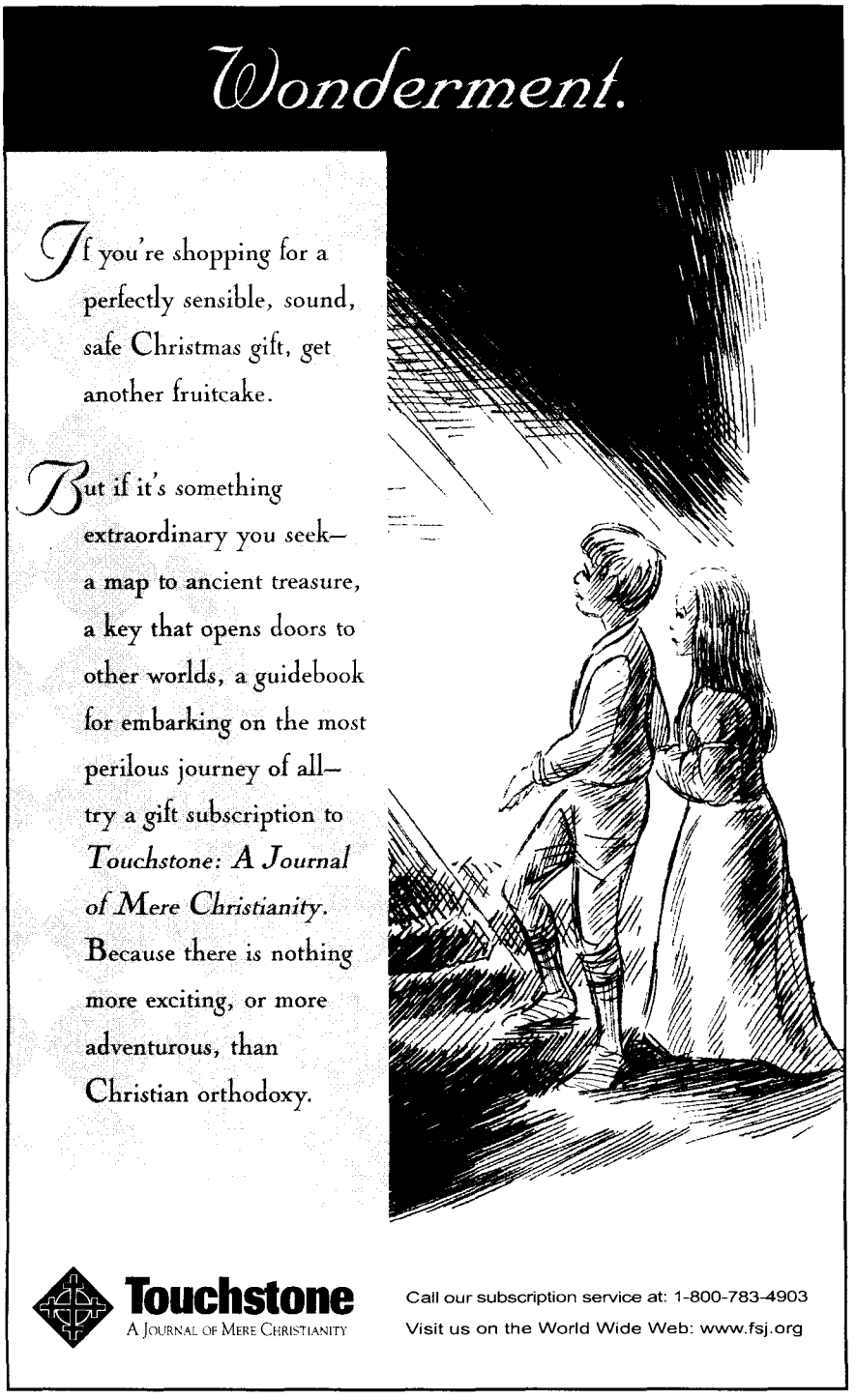
al law" and a "divine natural law of love." To the contrary, says Raunio: "To my knowledge, no one has recognized that natural law, that is, the Golden Rule, is from the beginning for Luther the law of *divine* nature, or the law of *divine* love." This in turn calls into question traditional Lutheran interpretations of Luther's "two kingdoms" doctrine, which tend to relegate natural law and obedience to commandments to the temporal kingdom. Raunio counters: "This distinction [between two kingdoms, or between the letter and spirit of the law] does not imply . . . that the *content* of the law changes. The letter of the law is the demand of divine law, though it cannot guarantee the fulfillment of the law."

THE NEW FINNISH PERSPECTIVE on Luther offers a refreshing corrective not only to the post-Enlightenment dualism of German Lutheran scholarship, but also to neo-evangelical Protestantism's tendency to define justification solely in forensic terms. It opens doors of ecumenical common ground by placing Luther's thought within the context of classical Christian traditions that preceded the Reformation, as opposed to emphasizing Luther's historically unprecedented notional distinction between Christ's *imputed* righteousness (justification) and *inherent* righteousness (sanctification). It likewise counters historic and contemporary caricatures of Luther's "two kingdoms" doctrine, including the thesis of William Shirer (*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*) that Luther's theology of the two kingdoms opened the door to the Nazi subversion of the Lutheran Church in Germany and, ultimately, to the Holocaust.

Weaknesses in this first-rate work are few. There are no indices, and the overlapping of themes in the essays necessarily results in what some may deem redundancy. On a more substantive note, three of the four responses to the Finnish essays (by Jenson, Braaten, and Lazareth) are laudatory almost to a fault. Only Bielfeldt, in response to Juntunen's essay "Luther and Metaphysics," engages in any meaningful critique, thereby demonstrating that he takes seriously the central question of whether the Finnish perspective on Luther is indeed *true*, as opposed to merely being useful for ecumenical dialogue.

Bielfeldt also notes that "the Finns are adept at discovering key passages (often in the early Luther), and ingenious in interpreting them in support of a comprehensive systematic vision built around deification." He then wonders whether or not the Finns might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not be as tied to their presuppositions as were the neo-Kantian German Lutherans. He adds, "I hope this is not the case."

Bielfeldt's reference to the early Luther pinpoints a rather significant omission in *Union With Christ.* This is the Finnish school's failure to distinguish between what Bielfeldt calls "the early Luther" and Luther's later writings. Alister McGrath has briefly noted, in his groundbreaking *Iustitia Dei,* that prior to 1530 much of Luther's writing set forth what McGrath terms a "sanative" view of justification wherein not only forgiveness but also healing were contained under the rubric of justification. This is most evident in Luther's *Lectures on Romans* (1515; see especially his comments on Romans 4:7), and to a lesser extent in his 1519 *Commentary on Galatians.*

By the time Luther's 1535 *Galatians* commentary appeared, however, he had set forth the emphatic distinction between forgiveness (justification) and healing (sanctification) that was later adopted by Calvin and the Reformers. For example, in his comments on Galatians 5:6 ("faith working itself out in love") he stated that the "faith" here was not *justifying* faith: "[Paul] is not talking about justification."

But the context of Galatians 5:6 includes Galatians 5:4, where Paul makes it clear that he *is* talking about justification: "You are severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the Law." The apparent reason Luther refused to identify "faith working itself out through love" (*fides caritate formata*) with justification is because he perceived that Rome had used the same phrase to argue that works must be *added to* faith (which Paul does *not* say). The force of polemics carried the day.

The question therefore needs to be explored whether it is the early Luther, rather than the later Luther, who offers more promise in the arena of ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Reformation tradition.

Revisionism Revisited

Government by Judiciary: The Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Second Edition. By Raoul Berger. *Liberty Fund. 555 pp. $19.50 cloth, $9.50 paper.*

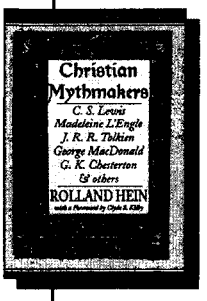
***Reviewed by* Robert P. George**

Almost twenty years before First Things' symposium "The End of Democracy? The Judicial Usurpation of Politics" (November 1996), Raoul Berger, in *Government by Judiciary,* sounded an alarm about the extent of the judiciary's encroachments on democratic legislative authority. Under the pretext of giving force to Fourteenth Amendment guarantees of due process and equal protection, Berger argued, the courts have in effect rewritten the Constitution to make it conform in key respects to the judges' own favored moral and political notions. Although Berger's book, like First Things' symposium, provoked a firestorm of protest from defenders of expansive judicial power, its critique of judicial usurpation was compelling then, and, if anything, seems even more so today.

It is a pleasure to reread Berger's masterwork in a beautifully produced and affordable Second Edition from Liberty Fund. The pleasure is increased by Berger's updating of his argument in supplementary textual notes and new footnotes, many of which offer careful yet characteristically spirited responses to the voluminous criticism he has received since *Government by Judiciary* originally appeared in 1977.

Berger famously argued that the great 1954 school desegregation case of *Brown v. Board of Education* was incorrectly decided because the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment did not intend its equal protection clause to require racial integration of the public schools. According to Berger, the sole purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment, which was

Robert P. George *is Cyrus McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University. His most recent book is* In Defense of Natural Law *(Oxford University Press).*



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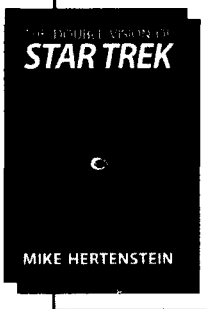

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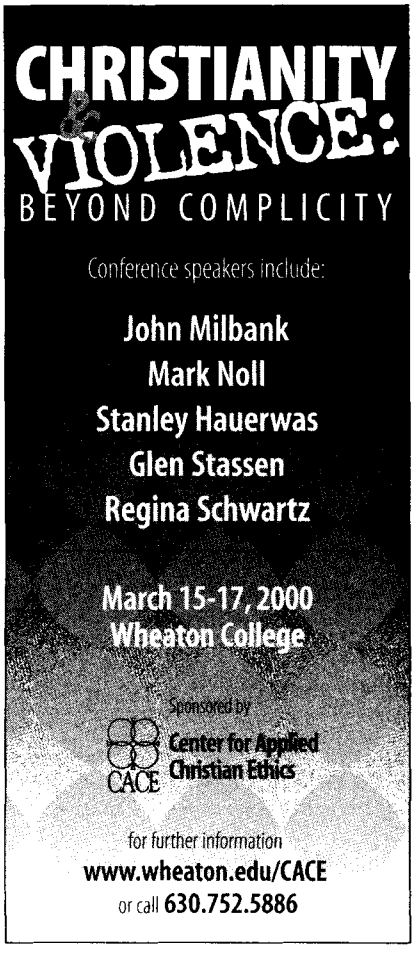
ratified in 1868, was to reinforce the federal Civil Rights Act of 1866 and protect it against repeal by a future Congress. Plainly the act did not outlaw segregation itself. Indeed, Berger argues that racial integration of the sort eventually mandated by the Supreme Court in *Brown* was anathema not only to virulently racist Democrats who opposed the Fourteenth Amendment, but even to many of its Republican supporters, whom he describes as "negrophobic."

The *Brown* decision, then, was wrong, according to Berger, not merely in its reliance on questionable psychological and social scientific evidence and methodologies, as many critics have alleged, but in its outcome. A correct decision, Berger maintains, would have upheld as constitutionally permissible a racist policy that he himself joins supporters of the *Brown* decision in condemning from the moral point of view. Unconstitutional "government by judiciary" is a bad thing, he insists, even in a good cause.



IRONICALLY, IN REJECTING the idea that the outcome in *Brown* can be squared with the original understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment, Berger, the great critic of judicial usurpation, finds himself in the company of Ronald Dworkin, Laurence Tribe, and other prominent liberal supporters of expansive judicial power. They too believe that the equal protection clause was not intended to prohibit de jure racial discrimination. They differ with Berger, however, in rejecting the proposition that the equal protection clause and other "majestic generalities" of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment ought to be construed to give effect to the intentions of the framers and ratifiers. From the alleged incompatibility of the outcome in *Brown* with the "original intent" of the Fourteenth Amendment, Berger infers the illegitimacy of judicially mandated desegregation. Liberal constitutional scholars and activists, by contrast, infer the illegitimacy of "originalist" arguments for judicial restraint. Having dismissed originalism, they then invoke the moral authority of *Brown* to justify, for example, the judicial manufacture of a right to abortion in *Roe v. Wade*.

Of course, not all "originalist" critics of judicial usurpation join Berger in condemning *Brown* as an example of "government by judiciary." I myself believe the case was correctly decided (though I regret Chief Justice Earl Warren's failure to make a truly principled argument along the lines advanced by Justice John Marshall Harlan in his dissent in the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*). The most prominent contemporary "originalist" of them all, Robert Bork, has argued that the outcome in *Brown* is justified because, whatever the framers' personal beliefs about the compatibility of segregation with the principle of equality they entrenched in the Constitution, it was plain by the 1950s that "separate" facilities inevitably meant inferior treatment for blacks.

THE EMINENT LEGAL HISTORIAN and constitutional scholar Michael W. McConnell has mounted a powerful assault on the modern consensus that "*Brown* was inconsistent with the original understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment" (*Virginia Law Review*, May 1995). Central to this attack are McConnell's efforts to undermine Berger's claim that the Amendment was intended to add nothing in content to the 1866 Civil Rights Act. McConnell points out that while the act enumerates a list of specifically protected rights, the Amendment speaks in general and comprehensive terms. In fact, the Amendment contains a provision identical in substance to a clause of the 1866 law that was removed from the final bill precisely on the grounds that it swept too broadly. "A fair inference," McConnell concludes, "is that the Amendment was understood to encompass the broad range of 'civil rights and immunities' that was entailed by the *original* draft of the 1866 Act." Thus, he maintains, Berger's claim that the Amendment was understood by its framers and ratifiers to go no further than the act in protecting civil rights is false to the historical data.

McConnell shows that during the years immediately following the Amendment's ratification, a solid majority of political leaders who had supported the Amendment believed that state-sponsored segregation was incompatible with its guarantees. Indeed, in several votes during the three or four year period following ratification, substantial majorities of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives—explicitly invoking the principles of the Fourteenth Amendment—supported school desegregation and opposed the separate-but-equal principle that was later upheld in *Plessy* and finally condemned in *Brown*.

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Zany Sermons Heard at St. Bozo's Parish

Do you ever sit through a sermon thinking, "I'd like to respond to that"? Here, selected from a large collection, are paraphrased snippets from sermons delivered by the legendary Fr. Flapdoodle at St. Bozo's Semi-Catholic parish. To each we give the response it deserves. See if you agree.

Fr. Flapdoodle: "What are you drawn to in a church? You're attracted to *life!* You're not attracted to a church that preaches rules and regulations and morality, that says you're going to Hell if you do this or that."

Response: Well, Father, if people won't receive moral wisdom in church that will guide them to Heaven, why would they go to church at all? After all, there's plenty of *"life!"* outside the church building. Does this prevalent attitude of yours explain the sharp drop-off in Mass attendance? Are people staying away or switching to evangelical churches, not because they're given moral guidance, but because they aren't?

Fr. F. (in a farewell sermon for his assistant priest who is moving to another parish): "I'm glad he's leaving because he's a lady's man and has quite a nightlife, and with him gone there'll be more beautiful women available for me."

Response: An attempt at humor, Father? If a priest's vow of celibacy is a laughing matter, shall I treat my marriage vows likewise? My wife wouldn't be amused. Is this how you fortify your parishioners to face the challenges and temptations of the coming week?

Fr. F.: "It's Thanksgiving, and perhaps many of you parents are unhappy because your kids are doing things you don't approve of. Well, I've got news for you: There's no such thing as a perfect family. So just sit down with them at the Thanksgiving table and be thankful for them just the way they are."

Response: A Catholic couple told me about their Thanksgiving dinner last year: Their son snuck outside to smoke a joint, and their daughter announced that she and her boyfriend had to get back to their apartment because they had "things" to do. Many parents would be profoundly thankful if they ever heard a sermon on how to deal with, not ignore, such decadence.

Fr. F. (at a funeral Mass for a murdered man): "I don't know why this happened. No one knows why. Even God doesn't know." Later in the sermon, Father addressed this injunction to the man's children: "You have your Dad's DNA. Take his energy into your future!"

Response: So at this solemn moment when the bereaved need most acutely to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, you give them limp agnosticism and pop genetics — but not Catholicism. You portray God as befuddled about His own creation, and direct the man's children to place their hope, not in God but in their DNA.

No doubt you could add some choice snippets of your own (send 'em in and maybe we'll put 'em in an ad!).

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McCONNELL DOES NOT DENY Berger's claim that "negrophobia" afflicted even many supporters of the Fourteenth Amendment, but he challenges the inference Berger draws from it—namely, that Republicans of the Reconstruction period could not have opposed the legally mandated separation of the races in state-sponsored education. McConnell observes that the conceptions of citizenship and civil rights that were at the heart of Republican political theory provided a basis for opposing segregation, notwithstanding anyone's beliefs about the alleged intellectual or social inferiority of blacks. Thus even "negrophobic" Republican members of Congress in the late 1860s and early 1870s consistently voted against legally mandated segregation.

At a minimum, McConnell's careful and exhaustive historical research gives us reason to subject to renewed scrutiny Berger's claim that the outcome in *Brown* is unsupported by, and indeed incompatible with, the original understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment. This makes the publication of a second edition of *Government by Judiciary* all the more timely and convenient.

The Middle East Without Tears

BETWEEN MEMORY AND DESIRE: THE MIDDLE EAST IN A TROUBLED AGE. By R. STEPHEN HUMPHREYS. *University of California Press. 297 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Daniel Pipes**

ANY BOOK ON THE Middle East that refers in the title, as does this one, to the region being "in a troubled age" is off to a good start. It means that the author acknowledges that the region with the worst economic performance in recent years, the largest military buildup, the most radical ideologies, and the most wars has major problems. This may not sound like much of a standard, but too many scholars either apologize for the Middle East or blame its problems on the outside world.

It is even more encouraging to find this big-picture analysis written not by a Washington analyst or a journalist, with their tendencies toward the superficial, but by a scholar deeply grounded in the past, someone with a wide context and a long perspective. Indeed, some of the most interesting commentaries on current events in the Middle East are written by medievalists on vacation, as it were, from their usual labors: Bernard Lewis is the outstanding figure, but others include Richard Bulliet, Ira M. Lapidus, and Roy Mottahedeh.

R. STEPHEN HUMPHREYS, a historian and specialist on Islamic studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, takes up some of the most difficult and persistent issues of the modern Middle East—the demographic and economic pressures, authoritarianism, pan-Arabism, "crazy states," military dictatorship, the role of Islam in politics—and analyzes them with intelligence and insight. Musing on his three decades plus of studying the Middle East, Humphreys asserts truths that many of his fellow academics neglect, though he does so in the gentlest and most constructive manner. The reader—whether a specialist or the "interested nonspecialist" whom Humphreys targets—comes away from *Between Memory and Desire* not just better informed but also more capable of understanding the choices that Middle Easterners face.

In particular, two themes stand out: the dominant role of military dictatorship and the rising force of Islamism (a.k.a. fundamentalist Islam).

Autocracy, Humphreys establishes, is the region's deepest and perhaps oldest dilemma. For the warlords, for example, who quite rapidly took over from the Prophet Muhammad's successors and dominated the era 850-1250, the "crucial political problem" was legitimacy—"some convincing

DANIEL PIPES, *by training a medieval historian, is director of the Middle East Forum and author of* Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From *(Free Press).*

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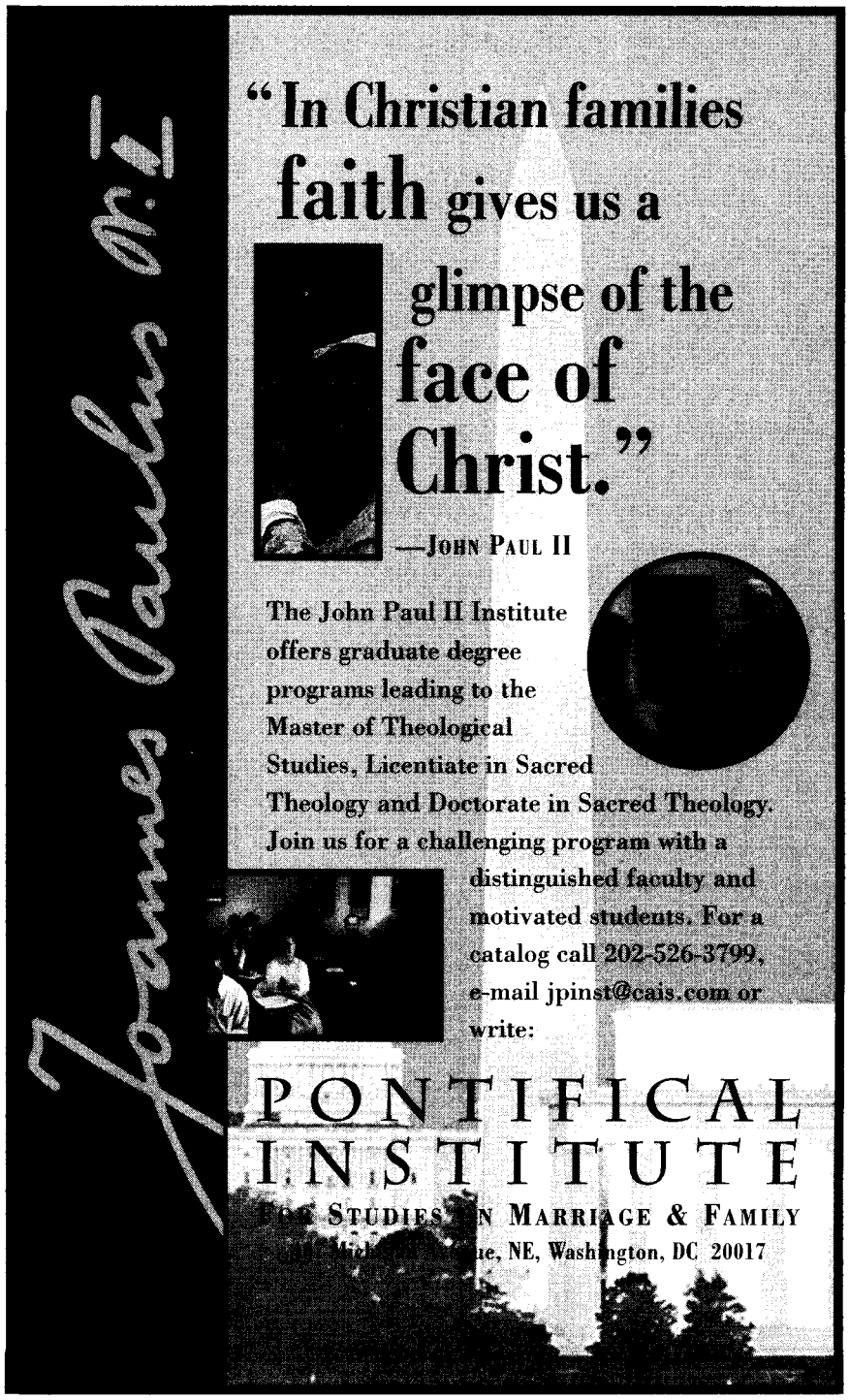
reason (beyond brute force) why his subjects should obey him and his rivals should respect his right to exist."

Sound familiar? It should, for the Middle East is today the world's least democratic region and it still grapples with the same demons (who have names like Qadhdhafi, Asad, and Saddam). In Humphreys' words, "most Middle Eastern governments since World War II have been haunted by the specter of illegitimacy, by the fear (usually quite well founded) that in the eyes of their subjects and of neighboring states they have no right to rule." The warlords of the postwar era all followed the same familiar path: "Every military regime seized power on the basis of the same pretext—that is, the corruption and weakness of the old civilian governments—and proclaimed the same program—that is, some form of nationalism, rapid economic development with social justice, and neutrality in the U.S.-Soviet confrontation." While these goals were in themselves credible, they "had a fatal flaw. They legitimized power as such, in the abstract, but they did not say who should wield it." In other words, the soldiers' programs failed to provide them with the justification they so craved, so they were left relying on brute force.

Middle Eastern populations, whether centuries ago or today, respond to this unhappy reality by withdrawing their allegiance from the authorities and turning for solace instead to the realms of religion and family life. This leads to a peculiar but widespread situation in which "Arab societies seem to regard their governments as an alien entity; they endure them, and they wait for them to go away." On one level, this mutual antipathy works: the ruled carve out an autonomous area of life, the officers get to stay (and stay) in power. "Military government may well not be good government, but by the standards of the twentieth-century Middle East it is—sometimes anyway—stable government." Trouble is, stability becomes an end itself and has a fearsome price. The preoccupation with staying in power means that other goods—economic development, civil society, cultural florescence—are sacrificed.

Warlordism turns out, for example, to be the single greatest obstacle to economic progress. "Only governments that enjoy the confidence of their citizens," Humphreys rightly observes, "can really take the steps needed" to enable growth. Not enjoying the benefits of civil society, the rule of law, or many basic freedoms, the Arabic-speaking countries are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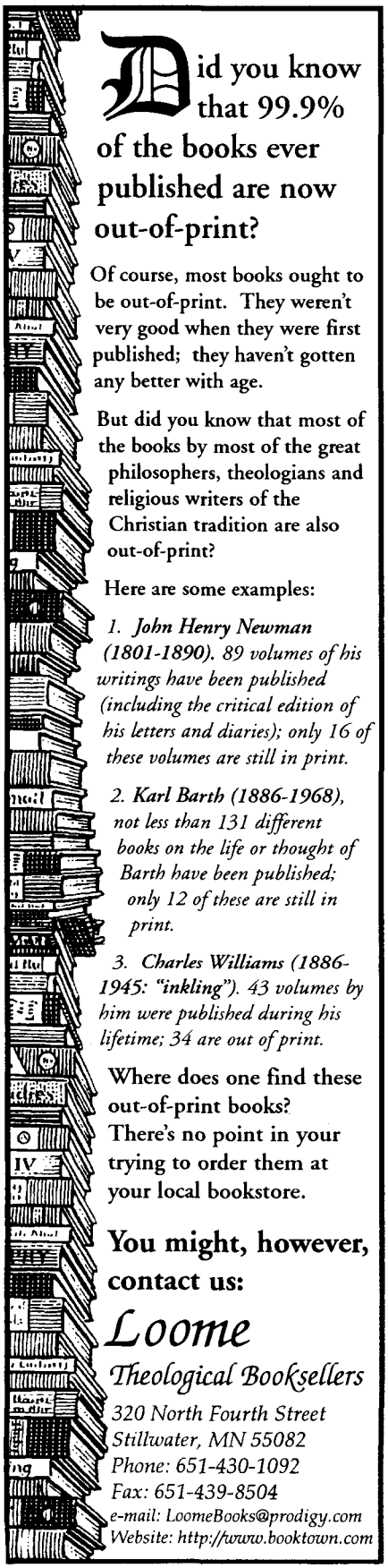

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3. *Charles Williams (1886-1945: "inkling"). 43 volumes by him were published during his lifetime; 34 are out of print.*

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falling ever further behind in the brutally efficient global marketplace: "Not one Middle Eastern state (with the partial exception of Turkey and of course Israel) has followed the only economic growth strategy that has worked since World War II—namely, the export-oriented production of high-value-added manufactures." As a result, and this is a startling fact, "there is not one Middle Eastern manufactured item that can be sold competitively on world markets."

MORE DEPRESSING YET, the author sees no relief from this predicament anytime soon: as far as the eye can see, "we are left with weak and frustrated governments, uncertain of their place on the world stage and unable to achieve key domestic policy goals. They themselves are under siege by frustrated, angry populations." The consequences are worrisome: "It is a certain recipe for turmoil, perhaps ultimately a cataclysm."

Humphreys traces the fall of bygone ideologies, like Pan-Arabism, and shows that the sort of conventional state patriotism found in most of the world has little chance among Arabic-speakers, for most of today's countries are creations of the colonial era that fail to draw on deep feelings. Given the paucity of rivals, Islamism pretty much has the field to itself, and Humphreys devotes considerable space to understanding what it is and what it implies.

In a useful categorization, he notes that Muslims have historically had three kinds of attitudes toward their religion, one relaxed and two stringent. In the relaxed viewpoint, Islam "is simply what Muslims actually do and believe." Its adherents hold that the established order is "inherently Islamic," and regard anything more as superfluous. This status quo way of looking at things holds that "Islam is a body of values, beliefs, and practices that undergirds and legitimizes the way things are." In this schema, the role of government is merely "to shelter and supervise ordinary religious belief and practice, not to establish the Kingdom of God on earth." This "go-along, get-along" outlook has been the norm through fourteen centuries of Muslim history.

However, in troubled times such as the present, one of the stringent approaches tends to take over. These are more revolutionary, seeing in Islam not affirmation of the status quo but the means to build "a new society founded on God's law." In one variant, it is the rulers (as in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan) who impose a strict Islam on their populaces; in the other, discontented elements (as in Algeria, Egypt, and also Saudi Arabia) use Islam "as a language of reform and protest" to mobilize against the rulers. With slogans such as "Islam is the solution," these movements raise expectations for a new utopian order. This simple division helps to clarify many of the tensions prevailing among Muslims today.

Humphreys also has important things to say about three prominent but delicate aspects of Islamic politics: *jihad* (conventionally translated as *holy war*), the treatment of women, and the human rights record. Ignoring apologetic blather about *jihad* being a form of moral self-improvement, he concentrates on its martial meaning and finds that it is a "crucial concept" for Muslims when fending off the West or justifying domestic repression. Women face the hard reality that "the Qur'an is irredeemably patriarchal." Human rights stumble on the fact that in Islamic law, "the claims of the community against its members take priority over those of individuals against the community."

Humphreys is no historical determinist, and he offers the cautious hope that the Middle East's many problems are not irremediable. That may be, but most readers will come away from this book persuaded that the region's "troubled age" will persist well into the future.

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History as Tragedy

A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939. By David Vital. *Oxford University Press. 944 pp. $45.*

***Reviewed by* William D. Rubinstein**

Until very recently, modern Jewish history was a subject beyond the academic pale, one certainly not included in the normal syllabus of university study. During the past thirty years all this has changed. The study of Jewish history has moved from beyond the periphery to the very center and, indeed, being inevitably seen as a tragedy leading to a unique catastrophe, has some claims to being more widely discussed today than almost any other aspect of modern European history. A potent indication of this change is the inclusion of David Vital's history of the Jews of Europe (excluding Britain) in the prestigious Oxford History of Modern Europe series.

On one level, *A People Apart* is a fine piece of work, synthesizing a remarkably complex story in an intelligent and well-argued way. To write a comprehensive history of the Jews of modern Europe requires a knowledge of many languages—a scholar must be able to read eight or ten at least—and a familiarity with sources scattered around the world, often in the most obscure places. Vital has done this job of synthesis extremely well. A noted expert on the history of Zionism, he is at his best when discussing the movement of which, it is apparent, he is a partisan. His account, for instance, of the reception of Chaim Bialik's epochal Hebrew poem "In the City of Slaughter" is gripping and memorable. As he moves away from Zionism, it is not unfair to say that somewhat flagging sympathies produce a less sure-handed text. Nevertheless, on one level this is an impressive study, even a remarkable one.

On another, deeper level, however, everything is wrong. The fundamental historical matrix underlying the view of European Jewish history consistently advanced by Vital might best be described in two terms, Holocaust teleology and Zionist triumphalism. It is not unfair to claim that all of continental European Jewish history is viewed by David Vital as an unfolding tragedy moving inevitably, like some Greek drama, toward genocide, with only Zionism, among the many political movements to find support among the Jews, having the prescience to foresee, however dimly, the catastrophe ahead. Both of these views are in my view seriously mistaken, and are, indeed, profoundly unhistorical. Most importantly, history is not like a Greek tragedy, but much more like the world revealed by chaos theory, in which a small change in one place effects a huge change overall. The outbreak of World War I, the Russian Revolution, the Depression, and, above all, the ascendance of Hitler to power were not preordained, but unpredictable pieces of incredibly bad luck. Hitler was unlike anyone known previously in German politics, either under the Empire or in the Weimar Republic.

Vital seriously overstates the ubiquity and virulence of anti-Semitism throughout continental Europe, as pervasive as it obviously was at many times and in many places. Conversely, he understates the strength of liberalism and philo-Semitism, and underestimates the ability of Jews, despite the most onerous of difficulties, to ameliorate their own condition. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to view European Jewish history from 1789 until 1933 as the opposite of the story conveyed in *A People Apart*—as a continuing story of advancement and greater tolerance, broken here and there by backward steps, but overwhelmingly one of progress and a movement from beyond the margin to the center. Striking evidence for this can be found all over Europe, even in the most unlikely places, both before and after the First World War.

The Beilis case—remarkably, not mentioned by Vital—was the most famous anti-Semitic "crisis" of the years just before World War I. In 1911 Mendel Beilis, a Kiev Jew, was accused of "ritually murdering" a Russian boy and placed on trial for this absurd charge. A wave of indignation *on behalf of* Beilis manifested itself around the world. Petitions protesting the trial, signed by hundreds of notable and influential figures, were drawn up in virtually every Western country. The British petition, containing over 350 names, was a virtual "Who's Who" of the British Establishment, and included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and most of the leaders of the Conservative party.

William D. Rubinstein *is Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.*

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The German petition was similarly signed by several hundred gentile German notables in every walk of life, including most of Germany's Nobel Prize winners. A *Russian* protest was signed by over sixty members of the Duma. Beilis was actually acquitted by a Czarist Russian court. (He then moved to America; his story is the basis of Bernard Malamud's famous novel *The Fixer.*)

THE FIRST THIRD of the twentieth century saw the unparalleled acceptance of Jews throughout Europe in areas previously barred to them, a fact obfuscated in Vital's narrative. Italy, for instance, contained the last medieval ghetto in Europe, in Rome, amazingly abolished only in 1870. Italy's tiny Jewish population of forty-four thousand in 1911 constituted only 0.12 percent of Italy's total population. Yet Italian Jews were, until Mussolini became an avowed supporter of Hitler's anti-Semitism in 1938, almost phenomenally overrepresented in Italy's leadership structure. There were fifteen Jews in Italy's Chamber of Deputies in 1894. An Italian Jew, Luigi Luzzatti, became Prime Minister in 1909. In 1920, the Italian Senate, consisting of distinguished citizens chosen for life, contained nineteen Jews in a chamber of 350 members. Originally, Mussolini's Fascist movement was, if anything, philo-Semitic rather than hostile to Jews. Aldo Finzi, widely regarded as Mussolini's "right-hand man," was a Jew, as was Carlo Foa, editor of the Fascist party's newspaper. So, too, was Guido Jung, Fascist Italy's Finance Minister, and three of the fifteen jurists who drew up the Fascist constitution of Italy. Examples as striking as these can be found in almost any European country.

While the First World War was, in one sense, a catastrophe for the Jews, it also witnessed the end of the Czarist Empire with its comprehensive restrictions on Jews, and the establishment nearly everywhere of regimes with a legal commitment to equality for Jews. From the mid-1920s, these guarantees were consistently violated in Eastern Europe, but it seemed inconceivable, even in 1929, that the future was as dark as it was. It was the twin catastrophes of the Great Depression and, above all, the entirely unexpected coming to power of Hitler in 1933 that transformed a situation at worst unsatisfactory into one that was terminal and murderous.

THE SUDDEN AND ALMOST wholly unexpected deterioration in the status of Jews in Europe was mirrored by their politics. David Vital has made the growth of Zionism the centerpiece of the awakening political consciousness of European Jewry. (Vital, it should be noted, worked for the Israeli government from 1954 to 1965 and held a chair at an Israeli university from 1977 until 1995.) While in one sense this is obviously true, his emphasis on Zionism also obscures the richness of non-Zionist political movements among European Jews. It also significantly exaggerates the strength and, certainly, the centrality of Zionism to European Jewry prior to the Holocaust. In interwar Poland the Zionist movement, itself divided into what were almost literally warring factions, was probably the third strongest political tendency in Polish Jewry, behind Bund Socialism and the strictly Orthodox *Agudas Israel.* Both of these were almost fanatically anti-Zionist and (as Vital clearly notes) urged the Jews of Europe to stay where they were.

Vital presents the worldwide number of "shekel holders" (paid-up members of the Zionist movement), but fails to comment on the surprising weakness, almost everywhere in Europe, of a Zionist movement "on the edge of destruction." In Hungary, for instance, there were only 1,500 shekel holders in 1930-31 and only 5,763 in 1934-35, less than 2 percent of the Jewish population of 750,000. The Zionist movement failed to share the same sudden and genocidal end as Bund Socialism for one reason alone: Montgomery defeated Rommel at El Alamein. Had the Germans conquered Palestine—almost inevitable if North Africa had fallen—the Jewish population of Palestine would certainly have been exterminated.

Professor Vital's most inaccurate comments are reserved for the last chapter of the book, the "Denouement" leading up to the Holocaust. The false and misleading statement that "Hitler's Reich was no more than a paradigm instance of a broader and deeper continent-wide phenomenon" flows from the author's treatment of the late 1930s as the climax of a Greek tragedy. Even so apparently indubitable a judgment as "For the Jews of Europe on the eve of the Second World War . . . there would be no escape" actually needs heavy qualification. Seventy-two percent of the Jews of Germany *did* escape before

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flight became impossible, as did two-thirds of the Jews of Austria, most in the only seventeen months between the March 1938 *Anschluss* and the outbreak of war at the end of August 1939. For the Jews of Poland, Russia, Hungary, etc., there was no escape, but prior to the war none had been threatened by the Nazis and surprisingly few wished to leave.

Despite its many merits, *A People Apart* represents a vision of modern Jewish history that serves as an obstacle to our understanding of the subject. History cannot be read backwards in this way. The history of a people does not obey the laws of stagecraft.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium. By Donald E. Miller. *University of California Press. 253 pp. $27.50.*

Writing in the *Christian Century* in 1955, Henry P. Van Dusen, President of Union Seminary in New York, claimed that a "new reformation" was changing the face of the Christian church. He declared that the Pentecostal churches growing so phenomenally in the Caribbean and elsewhere signaled "a new, third major type and branch of Christendom" that would stand alongside Roman Catholicism and historic Protestantism as a witness to Jesus Christ. Van Dusen challenged the Protestant establishment to come to terms with the Pentacostals and to learn from them as well. What Van Dusen discerned forty years ago is even more apparent today. While Christianity continues to thrive in America, it is the churches of the Third Force, not mainline Protestantism, that have been the primary beneficiary. Mainline leaders have been slow to grasp the significance of this trend for the future of Protestantism. They need to play catch-up, and a good place for them to begin is with this book. Miller, a professor of religion at the University of Southern California, has produced a sociological study of three successful non-mainline church movements: Calvary Chapel, Hope Chapel, and the Vineyard. Together these three movements, founded in the late sixties and early seventies, have spawned nearly 1,400 congregations in the United States and abroad. These churches are non-hierarchical and non-liturgical; biblicistic rather than doctrinal; experiential and emotional rather than

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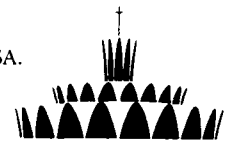

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intellectual. Furthermore, unlike previous sectarian movements which tended to define themselves against the dominant culture, these churches tend toward cultural accommodation. This is not entirely surprising: The majority of their members are baby boomers born after 1945. Miller found that Calvary, Hope, and the Vineyard affirm all the quintessential baby-boomer values, individualism and a therapeutic sense foremost among them. But he also discovered that they are "hostile to the narcissism they see in contemporary therapeutic values." Accommodation thus has its limits. Counseling tends to be "direct" and even "confrontational." There is "an enormous emphasis on personal accountability" and obedience to biblical injunctions. In this regard, Calvary, Hope, and the Vineyard temper their individualism with a strong counter-emphasis on community, lifting up the local congregation as a protection from the anonymity and isolation of secular culture. Miller himself is deeply attracted to this piety and ecclesiology. He concludes that "the style of Christianity dominated by eighteenth-century hymns, routinized liturgy, and bureaucratized layers of social organization is gradually dying." He also believes that Calvary, Hope, and the Vineyard point the way to the future as "new paradigm churches" for American society. John Henry Newman once observed that the essence of Protestantism is the search for a "fabulous, primitive simplicity." Whether this search represents strength or weakness is a matter of debate. What is true, in my view, is that the future of Protestantism belongs to those Protestants who search for that earlier simplicity and believe in their hearts that they can find it.

—Walter Sundberg

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF APOCALYPTICISM. VOLUME 1: THE ORIGINS OF APOCALYPTICISM IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. Edited by JOHN J. COLLINS. *498 pp.* **VOLUME 2: APOCALYPTICISM IN WESTERN HISTORY AND CULTURE.** Edited by BERNARD MCGINN. *524 pp.* **VOLUME 3: APOCALYPTICISM IN THE MODERN PERIOD AND THE CONTEMPORARY AGE.** Edited by STEPHEN J. STEIN. *498 pp. Continuum. $95 each; $285 the set.*

In 1790 the noted English chemist and Unitarian minister Joseph Priestley wrote a pamphlet to counter Edmund Burke's recent work bitterly attacking the evils of the French Revolution. On the contrary, Priestley held, the American and French Revolutions were a fulfillment of biblical prophecy: the beheading of the French king was predicted in Revelation 11, and creation is fast approaching the promised millennium. Such an opinion might seem surprising coming from the discoverer of oxygen (and one of the founding lights of Unitarianism as well); but the juxtaposition highlights one of the many delights to be found in this vast compendium of apocalyptic and millennial thinking across Western religions from the dawn of civilization until now. Each of the three volumes begins with an epigraph from Hans Urs von Balthasar, and a careful reading of the whole highlights his distinction between primary and secondary time. Primary time is the time allotted to each individual, while secondary time is merely a retrojected and projected time before and after one's (real) time on earth. This ontological disjunction makes apocalyptic thinking an anthropological constant: time is always coming to an end *for each individual*, after which the world will be no more. Apocalyptic thinking funnels secondary time, as it were, into the crucible of each person's "crisis of finitude." But since time does in fact go on, outsiders can easily mock the pathos behind the imagery, although they too will usually have their own closet millennialism, as this fascinating encyclopedia demonstrates. The essays in this reference work are of uniformly high quality—especially Thomas J. J. Altizer's fine essay on D. G. Leahy, an American who might have been the Catholic Church's most apocalyptic thinker since Boethius. Best of all, the purpose of each essay is not to mock, but to understand.

—Edward T. Oakes, S.J.

THE LURE OF THE MILLENNIUM: THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND. By RAYMOND BULMAN. *Orbis. 238 pp. $18 paper.*

This fascinating survey of millennialism by Raymond Bulman, a professor of theology at St. John's University, explains why millennial expectation does not end with the year 2000 and may just be warming up. Bulman gives respectful attention to Joachim de Fiore's vision of a harmonious "Age of the Holy Spirit" and takes a

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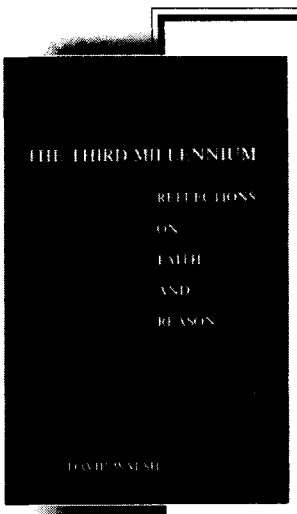
critical, though sympathetic, look at modern dispensationalism. He is greatly impressed by Jürgen Moltmann's "theology of hope," which, among other things, seeks to outline a future for Judeo-Christian relations in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Bulman's favored approach to the millennium, however, is that of Paul Tillich. "Christian realism," according to Tillich, excludes the possibility of an absolute defeat of evil within history. Even Revelation 20 speaks of Satan being chained, not destroyed. Nevertheless, sometimes there is an "hour" in history, a *kairos*, when a large measure of God's justice is established in this world. This is what millennialism should be about. *The Lure of the Millennium* has some provocative things to say about the future. Bulman shows that, not only are dates for the parousia already being set well into the twenty-first century, but also that there is something of a consensus among certain secular theoreticians that the world will face a great crisis between now and the year 2030. Some of Bulman's concerns about the fate of the world may someday seem as quaint as Joachim de Fiore's eschatological reading of the fortunes of the House of Hohenstaufen. Be that as it may, Bulman makes a good case that a theology that leaves the millennium to doomsday preachers is not doing anyone a favor.

—*John J. Reilly*

MEANS TO MESSAGE: A TREATISE ON TRUTH. By STANLEY L. JAKI. *Eerdmans. 235 pp. $22 paper.*

Despite annoyingly inadequate proofreading, this is the most satisfying book I have read in several years. *Means to Message* is both an indispensable philosophical primer and a work of profound, original, speculative philosophy. A physicist who is a historian and philosopher of science of international repute, Jaki writes in the neo-Thomist tradition of Chesterton (on whom he has written a fine book), Maritain, and Gilson, but for his tight but wide-ranging epistemological argument he brings to bear vast learning in the natural sciences of which these writers were unaware. In clear, idiomatic prose, deployed for both scholars and lay readers in fourteen dense but short and readable chapters, Jaki uses Aristotle's fundamental doctrine of noncontradiction to give a classic but also contemporary defense of the inescapably metaphysical character of will, mind, cognition, reason, and especially of language itself. *Means to Message* also provides an excellent introduction to Jaki's work—one of the most distin-



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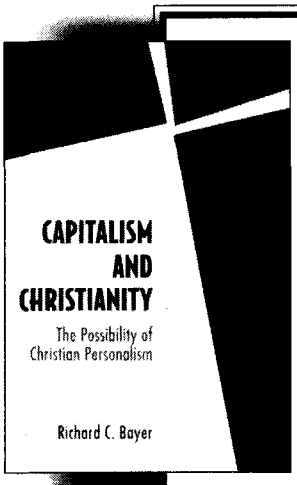

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guished scholarly enterprises of the last third of the twentieth century, an oeuvre that has not yet received due recognition. This book and the life project to which it is the most recent addition are astonishingly learned, judicious, and orthodox.

—*M. D. Aeschliman*

ONE NATION, TWO CULTURES. By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. *Knopf. 175 pp. $23.*

One of our leading historians, whose studies of Victorian England are acclaimed as definitive, here applies her talents to an exercise in "contemporary history." The subject is our much-discussed "culture war," which, Himmelfarb notes, is to be taken as a metaphor but a painfully appropriate metaphor. The book brings together a stunning array of past and present social commentary and data, making it an invaluable resource for putting "cultural revolution(s)" in context. The author argues that the cultural divide between "loose" and "strict" moralities has been endemic to the modern era, and she draws on sources as various as Adam Smith, *The Federalist,* and Daniel Bell's "cultural contradictions of capitalism" to explain why we should not be surprised by a culture war that is but a current manifestation of the perennial "diseases of democracy." Himmelfarb is very much a lower-case democrat who believes the remedy, insofar as there are remedies, is to be found in more vibrant democracy. Her chapters include a critical appreciation of today's enthusiasms about "civil society," with perceptive warnings about the ways in which those enthusiasms can be turned against the necessary tasks of politics, and can also be hijacked by statists who would bring society's mediating institutions under government control. The chapter on the family ("a miniature social system") is a treasury of argument and data that will become a necessary reference for those who want to make sense of "pro-family politics." The two cultures, she proposes, are best understood in terms of an "ethics gap," and here she draws upon and reinforces the important work of sociologist James Davison Hunter, whose writings have done so much to give empirical substance to the culture war metaphor. Himmelfarb is especially strong on religion as the first of our political institutions (Tocqueville), and believes that we are currently witnessing a Great Awakening that, while it may not prevail as a counterrevolution against the elite cultural revolutions of this century, can provide a "modest reformation" that contains and tempers their excesses. The concluding note is cautiously hopeful, and is joined to a warning that the culturally conservative corrective may lose its effectiveness if its moral program is separated from its religious inspiration. Along the way, Himmelfarb discusses this journal's position on "the judicial usurpation of politics," which she initially rejected in the strongest terms but now says is essentially correct, although "hyperbolic" in its expression. Throughout the book, and this is also reflected in her title, the author is refuting the contention of Alan Wolfe's *One Nation, After All* that there is no culture war and Americans are, with few exceptions, happy liberals devoted to the religion of tolerance. She devastatingly critiques the fraudulence of Wolfe's "research" and documents his long-standing hostility to religion, especially to its role in public life. (She does not mention that the Jesuits at Boston College have recently hired Wolfe to head up a new institute on, of all things, religion and public life.) Gertrude Himmelfarb is deeply patriotic, appreciating the genius and exceptionalism of the American experiment, and is confident that the culture war in its present and future forms will be contained by "a tolerance that does not require, as is sometimes supposed, a diminution of conviction but that is entirely consistent with the strongest convictions." Missing is a recognition that only the strongest convictions—convictions that are finally religious in character—can sustain tolerance. The book also fails to examine adequately why abortion is viewed, from both sides of the cultural divide, as the defining issue in the "ethics gap." Many of the facts and arguments of *One Nation, Two Cultures* will be familiar to readers of this journal, but the great achievement of the book is to place them into historical and theoretical context and present them in a manner both concise and powerfully persuasive. In view of the author's standing in the intellectual culture that she criticizes, the book should precipitate a lively and better-informed discussion of the culture war in which, like it or not, we are all embroiled.

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—Bruce Kuklick, University of Pennsylvania

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A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation. By Thomas More. *Sceptre. 318 pp. $24.95 cloth, $14.95 paper.*

While awaiting his death in the Tower of London, More wrote this most unusual example of prison literature, a spiritual treatise peppered with comic stories about nagging wives and overscrupulous donkeys. The *Dialogue* begins with two Hungarians, the rich young Vincent and his wise uncle Anthony who is on his deathbed. Vincent is afraid of the oncoming Turkish army, and asks Anthony to give him advice to sustain him during the coming tribulations. In the ensuing conversation Anthony gives Vincent with much patience and humor what can only be described as spiritual direction, explaining the nature of suffering, the need for detachment, and the importance of outside counsel in understanding and treating one's spiritual ills. Even after the spiritual basis of fear is removed, Vincent learns, man still needs natural and supernatural comfort to make it through life's rough periods. This remarkable work demonstrates how More faced death with a serenity and a sense of humor that grew out of his faith in the life eternal and his conviction that suffering was God's gift to those He loves. Before this edition one could read the *Dialogue* only in Old English (it is one of the ironies of publishing that *Utopia*, written in Latin with puns in Greek, has been more widely read than More's last and greatest English work), but thanks to a translation by Mary Gottschalk this spiritual masterpiece is now accessible to the modern reader.

The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America. By Lee Edwards. *Free Press. 394 pp. $27.50.*

Edwards, a professor at Catholic University and a Senior Fellow of the Heritage Foundation, has written a spirited history of the nuts-and-bolts political machinations that dragged American politics to the right. Organized around the political careers of Robert Taft, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Newt Gingrich, the story opts to explain *how* conservatives took over the Republican party rather than explain why. It touches only occasionally on the contributions of intellectual and religious conservatives (let alone religious intellectual conservatives), leaving out some of the most important pieces in the creation of the movement. Nonetheless, Edwards has reminded us of the political courage of the men who built conservatism into a political force that, he is convinced, is here to stay.

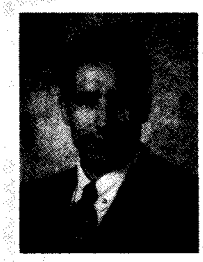
Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel. By Luke Timothy Johnson. *HarperSanFrancisco. 210 pp. $22.*

Luke Timothy Johnson's basic response to scholarly research on the historical Jesus is embarrassment on behalf of the Church: embarrassment that Christ's own followers would treat him as a dead figure of history who can be understood only through strictly rational methods of inquiry, barring faith and hope from having their say. To take the place of the dull emptiness of strict historical criticism, Johnson creates a vision of knowing and learning Jesus Christ, man and God alike, who is accessible both in the communal life of faith and in the Gospel texts. The final result is a living faith in a living God, informed but not suffocated by the discoveries of historical research.

The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions. By Marcus J. Borg and N. T. Wright. *HarperSanFrancisco. 288 pp. $24.*

Contained herein is a fascinating conversation, carried out in essay form, between what might be called the two reasonable poles of historical research on the person of Jesus. Wright represents the pole which claims that historical accuracy about Jesus can be grasped only through the premises of faith and theology; Borg, at the other end, is convinced that historical testimony is valid only insofar as it can be cleansed of dis-

Defending the Christian worldview



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torting confessions of post-Easter faith. It is difficult to imagine a book that lays out more carefully, calmly, and rationally the basic disputes in Jesus research today than this thorough and accessible scholarly exchange.

SHE SAID YES: THE UNLIKELY MARTYRDOM OF CASSIE BERNALL. By MISTY BERNALL. *Plough. 160 pp. $17.*

An extraordinary book by the mother of the girl who galvanized a nation with one word: "Yes." Here Misty Bernall tells her daughter's story from her childhood to her last day at Columbine High School. She presents Cassie honestly and fully, and draws us into her own experience as a mother watching the rebellion, the transformation, the murder, and now the worldwide influence of her child. (There have been some recent inconclusive reports questioning the original accounts of the details of Cassie's death.) Bernall lets Cassie and her friends speak for themselves as well, interspersing her narrative with photographs and quotations from letters and interviews. The power of Cassie's last moments is undeniable (see J. Bottum, "Awakening at Littleton," August/September 1999), but this is a story about more than her final witness to her Lord. It is about the trials and the strength of a family, the difficulties of being a teenager in a nihilistic culture, the miracle of conversion, and most of all about the power of love that bears, believes, and hopes all things.

SHOWS ABOUT NOTHING: NIHILISM IN POPULAR CULTURE FROM THE EXORCIST TO SEINFELD. By THOMAS S. HIBBS. *Spence. 208 pp. $22.95.*

The author is a promising young medieval philosopher at Boston College, but in the chapters of this book he comes across as a cranky conservative, more medieval than promising. The premises are fair enough: that nihilism "involves a simplification of human nature, a reduction of its complexity and range, and an abridgment of its aspirations," and that today's movies and television shows simplify human nature. The burdens of the book are to establish that television and movies are nihilistic; they display the inherent tendency of democratic liberalism towards nihilism; they remove any possibility for classical tragedy or comedy; and they hold up "demonic antiheroes" such as Hannibal Lecter for our emulation. To cover all this in just over two hundred pages, Hibbs leans more on tortured judgments and rhetorical excesses (e.g., a chapter entitled "Seinfeld's Dark God") than argument, in the end coming across as someone who needs to kick back and pop in a video.

THE HUMAN COUPLE IN THE FATHERS. Pauline Patristics Series, Volume 1. Introduction and notes by GIULIA SFAMENI GASPARRO, CESARE MAGAZZU, and CONCETTA ALOE SPADA. Translated by THOMAS HALTON. *St. Paul's/Alba House. 361 pp. $24.95 paper.*

A collection of often astonishingly beautiful writings on men and women, marriage, and family, culled from the works of ten great Church Fathers from Tertullian to Chrysostom. Includes a useful four-part introduction that covers all the territory: the coordinates of the man/woman relationship problem; biblical data; women and marriage in the Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions; the "image" of the couple and the tradition of *enkrateia* (translated as either virginity or matrimonial chastity); and an overview of the thought of each of the writers included. An informative, even inspiring, book that may be a surprise to those who imagine the Fathers as crotchety misogynists.

NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS. By DESMOND TUTU. *Doubleday. 291 pp. $23.95.*

When Desmond Tutu, former Anglican archbishop and Nobel laureate, was appointed chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation

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Commission by President Nelson Mandela, there was probably nobody who envied him the dubious honor. The present book offers his candid reflections on the commission's successes and failures, but the title captures his essential message. In a Western culture that is, on the one hand, insouciantly "nonjudgmental" and, on the other, determined to exact the last ounce of blood from those responsible for real or alleged crimes against humanity, Tutu represents a seasoned sensibility that combines both judgment and mercy as essential components in coping with a far from satisfactory world. This book provides the rare commodity that is moral wisdom.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND EVANGELIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by PAUL E. SIGMUND. *Orbis. 358 pp. $25 paper.*

PROSELYTISM AND ORTHODOXY IN RUSSIA. Edited by JOHN WITTE and MICHAEL BOURDEAUX. *Orbis. 353 pp. $25 paper.*

Two worthy additions to a worthy series of books under the title of "Religion and Human Rights" and presided over by John Witte of Emory University. The essays in the Sigmund volume address both the challenge of religious pluralism in Latin America and the challenge of Hispanic immigrants coping with a very different religious circumstance in the U.S. Especially noteworthy in the Witte-Bourdeaux volume is an essay by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington on the vitality of Orthodoxy in Russia and what Christianity in the West has to receive from it, notably the witness of the martyrs.

WASHINGTON AND ROME: CATHOLICISM IN AMERICAN CULTURE. By MICHAEL ZÖLLER. *University of Notre Dame Press. 278 pp. $35 cloth, $20 paper.*

The author is a sociologist who directs American studies at Bayreuth University in Germany, and he here succeeds in bringing together an enormous range of data that he joins to astute social analysis. The individualistic and essentially Protestant culture of America, he observes, would seem to be inhospitable to the inescapably hierarchical character of Catholicism in both its self-organization and its understanding of the Christian life. Yet after two hundred years of great achievements and some grave missteps, he thinks it not unreasonable that many people are braced for something like a "Catholic moment" in American life. Zöller is especially strong in his discussion of the period since the Second Vatican Council, which some thought called for revolution in both Church and society. The resulting conflicts and confusions led to disarray and demoralization among Catholic Americans, but Zöller backs up with convincing data his hunch that there is now a renewed vitality in a more "centered" Catholicism. For general readers, academics, and journalists in search of a fair and informative evaluation of the past and current state of American Catholicism from a sociological perspective, there is no better recent book than *Washington and Rome.*

CATHOLICS AND AMERICAN CULTURE: FULTON SHEEN, DOROTHY DAY, AND THE NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL TEAM. By MARK S. MASSA. *Crossroad. $24.95.*

The story of how Catholics have "made it" in America is endlessly fascinating, and pieces of the story are very nicely told by the author, a Jesuit at Fordham University who describes himself as a "historical theologian." The present book, it must be said, is much more history and sociology than theology, and it arrives at the conclusion that Andrew Greeley's model of ethnic tribes is probably the best way of thinking about Catholicism in America, past, present, and future. Throughout the author utilizes Reinhold Niebuhr's theme of historical irony, frequently to good effect, as in his observation that Dorothy Day and her following represent a Catholic cooptation of a very Protestant form of protest associated with the tradition of Emerson and Thoreau. Regrettably, the narrative ends with 1966 and one cannot help but wonder what the author makes of the gap between then and his rather complaisant conclusion about contemporary Catholicism.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Liberalism Without a Left, Conservatism Without Delusions

In the view of conservatives, liberals are in the saddle. In the view of liberals, conservatives are in the saddle, or at least threaten to take things over. There is no "us" without a "them," and it's hard to ginger up passion for our cause without believing that theirs is winning. So has it always been, and so, until Our Lord returns in glory, will it probably always be. Inveighing into this endless discussion comes social historian Russell Jacoby with a passionate new book, *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* (Basic Books, $26). His claim is that, without a utopian vision, liberalism perishes. Or as he puts it, "A left constituted the liberal backbone; as the left vaporized, the backbone went soft."

In the last decade, the collapse of communism and the stagnation of "social democracy" in Europe have deprived the left of any credible proposal for radical change. Even modest programs of redistributionism have been abandoned as intellectuals on the left have wasted their energies in promoting multiculturalist distractions, obscurantist cultural studies that have turned the academy into a narcissistic playpen, and communitarian platitudes that claim to bridge the divide between left and right. According to Jacoby, liberal theorists such as Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor have embraced a relativism that denies to the claims of justice any public purchase. (Although his call for a new left is in important respects similar to Rorty's plea in *Achieving Our Country*. See Public Square, March 1999.) Jacoby's conclusion is that without a real left that promotes a combination of high culture, radically democratic politics, and economic equality, liberalism is dead.

Andrew Sullivan is having none of it. Liberalism, he believes, has greatly benefited by the end of the utopian romanticism espoused by Jacoby. He asks, "Is it not truer, in the spirit of Isaiah Berlin, that it is the abandonment of utopia that makes liberalism possible?" Liberalism, Sullivan says, is concern for pluralism, fairness, and freedom. "For all the talk of the end of ideology, there are still plenty of causes." He offers this list of causes, on which I comment in brackets. "There is genocide again in Europe [No there isn't, unless one debases the term to mean perennial ethnic and religious conflicts]; there is economic inequality at home [There always will be; the question is whether there is greater economic opportunity]; civil rights are not assured for all Americans [Sullivan's particular campaign is for same-sex marriage]; civil liberties have had a terrible decade [I'm not sure what he means; perhaps new and intrusive antiterrorist laws in the Clinton era]; the racial question remains and festers [Undoubtedly true, although it is currently festering below fever level]."

I expect that Jacoby would say that Sullivan's very moderate liberalism pretty much fits what he calls "an age of apathy." The striking thing about this dispute between two articulate liberals is the very abstract level at which it is conducted. It is far removed from the on-the-ground political reality where conservatives have no difficulty at all in defining their cause in terms of conflicts over very specific policies. For a few examples: the protection of the unborn, the handicapped, and the dying; parental choice in education; tax and other policies supportive of marriage and the family; the defense of individual merit against quotas and related discriminations; the defense of property, civil, and religious rights against expansivist government

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control; and the vigorous affirmation of the achievements of Western culture, in opposition to multiculturalist fashions.

In the political and cultural worlds generally defined as conservative, there is no dispute comparable to that among theorists such as Sullivan, Jacoby, Rorty, and Taylor. Of course, they might say that is because conservatism is the stupid party and incapable of the big ideas necessary to fuel such disputes. And it is true that, except for a few libertarians, conservatives have no utopias to propose. In the spirit of Isaiah Berlin and Michael Oakeshott (incidentally, a mentor of Sullivan's who sometimes appears to be incidental to him), conservatives have quite enough to do in coping with the assaults upon decency, justice, and common sense perpetrated by those who call themselves liberals. Liberals in the saddle can indulge in abstract disputes about the nature of the ideology that legitimizes their rule. The fact that liberals are in the saddle, on the other hand, provides a sufficient working definition of conservatism. Which means, of course, that conservatism is reactive, but not nearly so reactionary as the utopian leftisms that have been posited against almost everything in the world as it is.

Utopianisms—from Lenin to Mao, and with many lesser imitators in between—have been the bloody bane of the century past. Jacoby's liberalism with a radical left backbone is incremental utopianism. Sullivan is right in saying that we are well rid of it—although, given the human propensity for grand delusions, utopianism will almost certainly reappear in different guise. Apart from his sexuality project, Sullivan is more accurately described as a conservative, albeit something of a closet conservative. Working as he does for the *New Republic* and the *New York Times*, he knows what is required to keep his place in the saddle.

FT

Hope at the Heart of Horror

Theodicy—how to justify the ways of God to man—is an old intellectual chess game that goes on and on. An interesting replay is Richard Swinburne's new book, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford University Press). Swinburne is professor of the philosophy of religion at Oxford and, like innumerable writers before him, he begins with the conundrum that, in view of the reality of evil, God is either not omnipotent or not good. The alternative conclusion, of course, is that there is no God. Swinburne sets out to defend God's omnipotence and goodness (although he is weak on God's omniscience) by arguing that the evil in the world is necessary to the measure of good in the world, with good finally winning out over evil. Along the way, he poses fascinating thought experiments that will delight those interested in intellectual gambits. Very neatly done, for instance, is his argument that we would be less fully alive in a world in which there is only 10 percent of the evil that there is in the world as it is.

His line of reasoning is very close to that of Leibniz, that this is "the best of all possible worlds," except he agrees with Aquinas that God could have made other and different things, which would have resulted in a different and better world. The gist of the argument is Leibnizian, however, and, of its kind, it is very nicely executed. Its kind, however, is terribly bloodless. In the vortex of life as lived, it does not stand up to the experienced reality of, for instance, the Holocaust, or Stalin's starvation of the Ukraine, or the death of a ten-year-old daughter by leukemia. In one way, this is not Swinburne's fault. The fault is with the bloodless, syllogistic way in which the theodicy question is conventionally posed. It begins with a rationalistic assumption about the attributes of God—as though we know what omnipotence and goodness mean—and then we put that concept of God to the test of our experience of evil. Uncritically accepting that definition of the theodicy question, Swinburne gives worthy battle. But the God in question is the God of certain philosophers, not the God of history and revelation; certainly not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and most certainly not the crucified God incarnate.

To old-fashioned rationalists, whether skeptics or atheists, one can warmly recommend *Providence and the Problem of Evil.* The more honest among them will recognize that they are checked, if not checkmated, by Swinburne's intellectual moves. But the great question of whether we can believe that God is both good and omnipotent is left at the level of a chess game, and reasonable people may think the game results in a draw. As I contend in a forthcoming book, *Death on a Friday Afternoon*, this falls far short of an encounter with the God of Israel who accepts defeat by our definition of the game in order to expose the error of our definition. It not only falls short; it is almost beside the point. Almost, but not quite. Swinburne scores important, and sometimes decisive, points in a theodicy argument wrongly framed. His book can serve the useful purpose of

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encouraging people to set that argument aside in order to move on to the mystery of cross and resurrection that are at the heart of the Christian reason for hope in the midst of the horror.

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PROPOSING DEMOCRACY ANEW—PART THREE

In the first two parts of this reflection on the democratic prospect in the twenty-first century, I set forth seven of ten propositions—readily admitting that they could be subdivided or combined into more or less than ten. The first seven are: 1) The sovereignty of the democratic state is accountable to a higher sovereignty. 2) In a democratic society, we live under several and sometimes conflicting sovereignties. 3) The problems of democracy are inherent in democracy. 4) Democracy is and always will be unsatisfactory. 5) Democracy requires more than democratic institutions. 6) Democracy is more than majority rule. 7) Democracy presupposes that the legitimacy of positive law depends upon its compatibility with moral law.

Implicit in all that has been said so far, but perhaps needing to be said explicitly, is the understanding that *the democratic state is necessarily a limited state.* As we have seen, it is substantively limited by the acknowledgment of a higher sovereignty, and it is procedurally limited by the just claims of communities other than the state and by their role in the right ordering of society. The discernment and teaching of the moral law, for instance, is primarily the task of institutions such as the family and the church. In articulating that law, the role of the state is responsive rather than generative. The state is not a source of morality. More precisely, the state has no morality except the moral duty, legally defined, to give effect to the judgment of the people as expressed through the institutions of representative democracy.

Family, church, voluntary associations of all kinds—these are what I have frequently referred to as the "mediating institutions" of society (see *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society*, AEI Press, 1996). The mediating institutions stand between the autonomous individual and the "megastructures" of society, beginning with the state but including also corporate structures and others. The idea of "mediating institutions" is closely related to the Catholic doctrine of "subsidiarity." In my experience, that doctrine is little understood, even by Catholics. Too many have got it exactly backwards. They think it means the parceling out or "devolution" of state power to other institutions of society, rather than the inherent location of such powers and functions in what *Centesimus Annus* calls "the subjectivity of society." The doctrine of subsidiarity and the idea of mediating institutions mean that the proper subject of social decisions is the person and persons in community. Persons, individually and in free association with others, should make the decisions on matters most closely affecting them. This is the gist of the argument for "civil society" that has received so much attention in recent years.

In Response to Critics

Some conservative critics of the mediating institutions argument, I should note as an aside, complain that it, too, falls into the ideologically liberal trap of defining society in terms of only two entities, the state and the solitary individual, with mediating institutions being a fragile buffer between them. The complaint is based, I believe, on a misunderstanding. While the state is the chief "megastructure," it is joined by corporations, professional associations, organized labor, and a host of others. (Smaller people-to-people-sized businesses and labor unions, for instance, can also be more in the nature of mediating institutions.) More important, the complaint assumes that the argument understands the individual in terms of liberalism's "autonomous self." That is not the case. By individual I mean the "acting person" (Karol Wojtyla) who also receives an identity that is mediated through communities that are inseparable from that continuing identity. In the Christian understanding, this happens at the deepest level by incorporation into the community of grace that is the Church.

Here, too, a clarification is in order with respect to the seventh proposal and touching on the megastructure that is the state. *Evangelium Vitae* accents the conflict between positive law and moral law on questions such as abortion, euthanasia, and the protection of those who cannot protect themselves. Those of us who champion laws for the protection of the unborn are accused of violating our own principles by wanting to expand the sphere of state power. Nothing could be further from the truth. The protection of innocent human life is the *first* responsibility of the limited state, and abortion is inescapably a *public* question. Again it is necessary to emphasize that the abortion debate is not over private opinions about when human life begins. That

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is not a moral or political question, nor is it a matter of private opinion. The question of when human life begins is indisputably and very publicly settled by science. The question of which human lives belong to the community that is protected by law is inescapably a political question. If politics is about how we ought to order our lives together, then abortion is the unavoidable political question of who belongs to the "we." It is not a private question but the most public of questions, namely, Whom do we include, and whom do we exclude, from the polis?

My eighth proposition: *The separation of church and state does not mean and cannot mean the separation of religion from public life.* That proposition is, of course, at the heart of this journal's reason for being. Critics of the Supreme Court's decisions on church-state questions routinely point out that "the separation of church and state" is not in the Constitution. That is certainly true, but the phrase has, for better and for worse, achieved a quasi-constitutional status. In recent years there are encouraging signs that the Court is moving away from extreme separationism to a doctrine of "equal regard," meaning that institutions and practices cannot be discriminated against simply because they are religious in nature. Yet there is no doubt that the separationist doctrine as applied by the courts in the last half of the twentieth century contributed powerfully to creating a naked public square.

Naked, Sacred, Civil

It bears repeating here that the alternative to the naked public square *is not the sacred public square but the civil public square.* We should not want a confessional state. The state should not confess a faith. It does that, however, when, in hostility to the faith confessed by its people, it confesses the ersatz religion of militant secularism. The great antidemocratic danger, contrary to much popular punditry, comes not from the free exercise of religion but from the secularist creeds imposed by governments that recognize no higher sovereignty. That was the reality of Nazism and communism. That danger is also present in our democracies when "the separation of church and state" is taken to mean the separation of religion from public life. The public square, like nature, abhors a vacuum. If it is not filled with the lively expression of the most deeply held convictions of the people, including their convictions grounded in religion, it will be filled by the quasi-religious beliefs of secularism.

One may well ask whether the religious situation of "Christian America" is capable of informing democratic deliberation and decision by reference to religion and religiously grounded moral discernment. My argument is that our society is aptly described as Christian—incorrigibly, confusedly, and conflictedly Christian. Christians who say that America is post-Christian are, more often than not, motivated by an understandable desire to escape the embarrassment that is this Christian society. The Christianity of Christian America is in many ways attenuated and degenerate, but it is attenuated and degenerate Christianity. Recall T. S. Eliot's observation that a society that was Christian still is Christian until its Christianity has been replaced by a positively defined something else.

Although there are many contenders to replace Christianity in providing a comprehensive understanding of reality and a source of moral discernment, it has not been replaced. Christianity has been buffeted, battered, distorted, and exploited for innumerable purposes, but it has not been replaced. Once again, 90 percent of the American people say they are Christian. It is difficult to imagine the circumstance in which they would say they are anything else with the same implied commitment. Of course, they identify themselves as American, but that changes little since what they mean by American is inextricably entangled with being Christian. Such is the typically American "God and country" packaging of identity that always threatens to drift into a civil religion that is in tension, if not conflict, with biblical religion.

To be sure, in speaking about Christian America in this way, we are speaking more sociologically than theologically. No claim is made that the religion under discussion is "authentic," however that may be defined. Paul J. Griffiths of the University of Chicago has written interestingly about what constitutes an authentically religious account of reality. Whether it be Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, or some other religion, says Griffiths, an authentic religious account has three characteristics: it is comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central. That is to say, authentic religion provides a complete account of reality, it bespeaks an ultimate allegiance that is not in the service of any other allegiance, and it is the controlling core of one's existence. Perhaps most Christians would like to think that that pretty much describes what they mean when they say they are Christians.

Claiming to Know Too Much

Sociologists of religion in America, however, tell us that religion for most Americans is not comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central. It is, they say, fragmented, instrumental, and marginal. By that

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they mean that religion typically provides an account not of everything but of the segments of reality demarcated as "religion," "spirituality," and, more ambivalently, "morality." In fact, they say, what we find in America is religion that is typically not unsurpassable but instrumental, being in the service of "meeting the needs" of the unsurpassable self. And, far from being central, it is typically marginal. The conclusion follows that the religion of "Christian America" is inauthentically religious.

Sociological data and theory are not uninteresting, but scholars who draw that conclusion are claiming to know ever so much more than they can possibly know. In theological and commonsensical fact, only God knows what all is involved in what people say and think and do religiously. Most people are religiously inarticulate, as they are inarticulate about most things that matter, with the result that their banalities may sometimes disguise a depth of meaning and experience that would greatly surprise us. We should be open to the possibility that someone employing the conventional patter about religion "meeting my needs" has a spiritual life worthy of a John of the Cross or a Teresa of Ávila. The conventional patter is simply the culturally available vocabulary. In any event, however much popular piety may be viewed condescendingly by theologians and debunked by social scientists, it is for purposes of social order the source of moral sentiment and judgment. That is the reality, admittedly a deeply confused reality, of Christian America—and it will remain that deeply confused reality until it is replaced by something that is positively something else.

To separate government from the reality of religion—from that which speaks to the deepest and highest and most commanding ways of understanding what is really real—is to separate government from the people who are the source of its legitimacy. Nonetheless, the separation of church and state, rightly understood, is good for both government and church. While we must insist that government be favorably disposed toward religion, we should not want an established religion. In the 1986 "Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation," Josef Cardinal Ratzinger declared, "God wishes to be adored by people who are free." Coerced faith is no faith, and coercion of religious belief is deeply contradictory to the spirit of the gospel, as adumbrated in Vatican II's declaration *Dignitatis Humanae.* In the 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* John Paul II wrote that "the Church addresses people with full respect for their freedom. Her mission does not restrict freedom but rather promotes it. The Church proposes; she imposes nothing." The Church's public proposal is well served by the separation of church and state, rightly understood.

The separation of church and state, it must be emphasized, is a limit set on government, not on religion. The free exercise of religion allows a religious community to democratically agitate for its legal establishment and for a confessional state. I believe such a goal is wrongheaded, and it is clearly contrary to Catholic teaching, as the above citations illustrate. Nevertheless, the free exercise of religion means that religion is permitted to promote also dumb ideas. It is the modern state, with its insatiable ambition to power, that is limited by the separation of church and state. By that separation, the state acknowledges its incompetence in the most important areas of life, and most particularly with respect to the ultimate questions addressed by religion. The state's systematic confession of its incompetence opens public space for the democratic politics of persuasion and consent rather than the politics of coercion.

What Is Meant by Pluralism

My ninth proposition is this: *Pluralism is written into the script of history.* I take that phrase from Father John Courtney Murray, who had such a significant impact upon the Council's deliberations about religious liberty. I would take the proposition somewhat farther than Fr. Murray, however, and note that it is God who has done the writing. Pluralism—meaning that we live together with people who inhabit different worlds of meaning—would seem to be the permanent human condition. Indeed, as Samuel Huntington of Harvard has written, the "clash of civilizations" in the new millennium likely means that pluralism will be more pronounced in the future. This raises important questions about the unity of the human destiny and about the Church's task of evangelization. I will not go into those questions here, but simply suggest that they are admirably addressed in the above-mentioned *Redemptoris Missio.*

Genuine pluralism is not simply the sociological fact of a plurality of worlds of meaning; it is a social and cultural achievement. Frequently people appeal to pluralism when making the argument that religion should be separated from public life. The naked public square is necessary, they say, "because we live in a pluralistic society." This is a deeply mischievous misunderstanding of pluralism. Pluralism is not pretending that our deepest differences make no difference. Pluralism, rather, is engaging those differences within the bond of civility. Pluralism requires mutual respect for

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persons, not indifference to truth. One can even agree with the maxim found in popular Catholic teaching of an earlier time that "error has no rights." But errors are attached to people, and people do have rights. Only through the persuasive proposal of the truth can people freely detach themselves from their errors.

Does this mean tolerance is a Christian virtue? The appeal to tolerance, many are inclined to think, is the last resort of the scoundrel. No doubt scoundrels take advantage of tolerance, and we earlier discussed devious uses of what Herbert Marcuse dubbed "repressive tolerance." Yet I would insist that tolerance is a Christian virtue. Tolerance, however, is not indifference; it is not simply "putting up with" those with whom we disagree. It is genuine respect for the other, even when we cannot respect what they do or say. Secularists routinely claim that religion is a threat to tolerance, and there is no lack of historical evidence for that claim. But we now must more vigorously make the case that religion is the most solid foundation for tolerance. Recall the observation that we do not kill one another over our disagreements about the will of God because we agree that it is the will of God that we not kill one another over our disagreements about the will of God. This is agreement in the truth that this *is* the will of God. Social and historical circumstances have led us to recognize that truth, but we recognize it because it is the truth. Again, it is John Paul II who so powerfully argued, especially in *Centesimus Annus*, that it is not agnosticism that secures a free and just society but a religiously informed respect for the person and the person in community.

The Normality of Conflict

Then to my tenth and final proposition: *Democratic deliberation and decision-making is necessarily conflictual.* In thinking about the century and centuries ahead, we may and should hope for what Pope Paul VI called "the civilization of love," but the civilization of love is not the civilization of unanimity. Short of the End Time, even among people of the best will (and it will never be that everybody will be of the best will), there will be different and frequently conflicting understandings of moral truth and the common good—and, increasingly, there is disagreement over what might be meant by words such as "truth" and "good." Such conflict need not be lethal or self-destructive if several conditions are maintained.

First, the sovereignty of the state and the sphere of politics must be carefully circumscribed. Samuel Johnson wisely observed, "How small the part of all that human hearts endure can laws or kings either cause or cure." In fact, laws and kings—and democratic governments as well!—can cause a great deal of human unhappiness, typically by overestimating the measure of human unhappiness that they can cure. The deepest and most important things over which people find themselves in conflict should, as much as possible, be beyond the scope of the state. This truth is closely tied, of course, to the doctrine of subsidiarity and the revitalization of "mediating institutions," as discussed above.

Second, conflict is not destructive if the political process is open to citizens of all convictions, and there are neither penalties nor rewards based on religious conviction or the lack thereof. The public square must always be open to all—at least in theory that is supported by determined effort. Despite the argument of some theorists, total openness and unimpeded communication are not possible. Some will be excluded by mental disability, others will exclude themselves by, for example, criminal actions. Even when assailed by violence and corrupted by bad faith—in fact, especially then—the commitment to the civil public square is to be sustained. It can be sustained by an awareness that God calls us to care for the earthly polis, and by the knowledge that opponents have access to truth and a capacity for reason even when they seem determined to prove that they don't. And again, it helps to know that the most important things to be communicated and agreed upon are not in the realm of politics.

Third, the Church must acknowledge the limits of its competence in political and economic life. In relation to politics it strives to maintain a principled, firm, and nonpartisan stance. Admittedly, that is not easy. In specific circumstances of partisan conflict, even the most carefully crafted statement of principle will be viewed by some as partisan. Therefore, a good rule of thumb when it comes to statements that intend to invoke the Church's moral authority is this: When it is not necessary to speak, it is necessary not to speak. At stake is the danger of turning the gospel into an ideology or party platform. Politics is not the vocation of the Church. The Church is to help equip the faithful for the exercise of their vocations in the public square. The vocation of the Church is to help sustain many different vocations.

Arguments that Are Public

Fourth, religious people, and religious leaders in particular, must, when they enter the public square, make genuinely public moral arguments. That is to say, they must, as much as possible, frame their

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arguments in a public vocabulary that is as accessible to as many people as possible, and must exercise a disciplined restraint in appealing explicitly to religious authority. What the Bible says or what the Church's Magisterium says should inspire and inform our public argument, but it is not a genuinely *public* argument to tell others that we should do something *because* it is the teaching of the Bible or the Magisterium. In framing arguments that are truly public and not limited to Christians, we have, of course, a powerful resource in varieties of natural law traditions.

That fourth condition requires two caveats. We might ask: In a society where everybody, or at least a politically effective majority, accepts the authority of the Bible, why shouldn't we be able to appeal explicitly to biblical teaching in political disputes? The answer is that we are free to do so, of course, but it would make the public square captive to the endless disagreements over interpreting the Bible that have already so sadly divided the churches. The wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries devastated the social and political fabric of Europe, and nobody should want to flirt with a repeat of that tragic experience. The situation might be very different if or when the wounds of a divided Christianity are healed. That happy prospect, however, appears to be a long way off.

The question of divided Christianity touches on our understanding of the Church, or ecclesiology, as it is called. Here enters the second caveat about the rule that public arguments be made in a way that is publicly accessible. Stanley Hauerwas, a Methodist theologian at Duke University, is often quoted: "The Church does not have a social ethic. The Church is a social ethic." I entirely agree with what I take to be intended by that formula. The greatest public contribution of the Church is for the Church to *be* the Church—fully and unapologetically. If the Christian people were more fully living together the faith that they profess, they would also, individually and corporately, be more effective in the public square.

A difficulty with the Hauerwasian position, however, is in locating this church that is to stand in countercultural challenge to the surrounding society when the great majority of people in the surrounding society think they belong to the church. Perhaps they are simply to be told that they are wrong about that. But the prospect of mass excommunication would seem to require some careful theological reflection. A good many Christians—Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox, liberal and conservative—appear to have few theological inhibitions about assuming that most other Christians are not really Christian. Whether by criteria of political correctness, doctrinal orthodoxy, ecclesial connection, or moral rectitude, most Christians are assumed to be excommunicate. Thinking that way makes it much easier to believe that America is a post-Christian society, which relieves us of the burden and embarrassment of a society that is—incorrigibly, confusedly, and conflictedly—Christian America. Thinking that way is, I believe, theologically untenable, sociologically contrary to fact, and morally unseemly.

"Steady Work"

I have offered, then, ten propositions regarding church, state, and democracy in the twenty-first century. We should be able to understand why many Christians are suspicious of the liberal democratic idea. They associate it with a liberalism that is purely "procedural," that prescinds from moral tradition or judgment. Or they associate liberalism with the doctrine of the Imperial Self, in which there is only government on the one hand and, on the other, the autonomous, atomistic individual. Or they associate liberalism with a brand of libertarianism premised upon a laissez-faire doctrine of the survival of the fittest. These versions of liberalism were rightly condemned by the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century.

Throughout the course of modernity, the vocabulary of liberalism has been promiscuous in its couplings with strange doctrines. But liberal democracy would seem to be the likely future. If it is liberal democracy along the lines proposed here, it is worthy of support. It is not the last word; it is not Fukuyama's "end of history"; I'm not sure it's even, in Churchill's phrase, the least bad of all the systems of government that have been tried. But at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it's better than anything else on offer. That may not seem like much, but, as at the beginning of the first millennium so also at the beginning of the third, alien citizens know not to expect too much from the earthly city.

It has only to be added that no existing government, including the American experiment in democratic government by republican means, adequately exemplifies the government described in these three essays. Probably none ever will. That does not mean we have been describing an impossible, and therefore irrelevant, ideal. Rather, this is proposed as a model, firmly grounded in a Christian understanding of anthropology, ethics, and historical possibility. Some political experiments will approximate it more adequately than others. Approximation is the continuing task, and when we

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grow weary and are tempted to despair, recall the fellow in the Eastern European shtetl whose job was to look out for the coming of the Messiah. With his family and other responsibilities, he told the elders, he needed a raise. "The shtetl can't afford a raise," they replied, "but look at it this way: It's steady work."

FT

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, 1909-1999

I was going to write something about Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, but then Michael Aeschliman of Boston University submitted the following about our friend, which says what needs to be said better than I could.

It was a great privilege to have known the Austrian historian Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, who died peacefully last spring at his home in the Austrian Tyrol at the age of ninety. Erik and his wife, longtime anti-Communists and anti-Nazis, were in exile in the United States from 1938 (the year of the Nazi annexation of Austria) until 1946, when they returned to their native country. Nearly every year afterward, Erik lectured in America. He also traveled widely throughout the rest of the world. (Fluent in eight languages, with a reading knowledge of another ten, he was the most astonishingly gifted linguist I have ever known.) At the age of twenty Erik served as a special correspondent in Russia for a Hungarian daily paper; from that time forward he pursued a unique career as a journalist, historian, lecturer, traveler, novelist, and painter. It is to the great credit of William F. Buckley, Jr. that he had the insight to appoint Erik as a regular writer for *National Review*. His "From the Continent" column was both learned and topical, and attracted the attention of such luminaries as Jacques Barzun. In addition to many books in German (with translations into several other languages), Erik wrote two volumes in English that are a great help in understanding the history of the last two centuries: *Liberty or Equality* (1952; revised edition 1993) and *Leftism Revisited* (1953; revised edition 1990). These works combine detailed political and intellectual history with sociology, philosophy, and theology in a way that is a standing reproach to the esotericism and neophilia of American academic publishing.

Erik disliked specialization; throughout his long life he worked against it by assembling and deploying vast, coordinated learning. He tried to see life steadily and see it whole. Witness to the collapse of an empire and the rise and fall of two brutal totalitarianisms, he was at the vortex of world-historical events; in part because of what he had observed, he could never credit the nostrums by which so much of modern opinion is sustained. As a consequence, he was often a lonely witness against the "treason of the intellectuals."

Politically and religiously Erik was just as comprehensive, and just as rigorous. He was a Catholic aristocrat who never lost his loyalty to the Hapsburg family and the empire it ruled for so long, an empire whose destruction in 1919 unleashed a nightmare in Central Europe. He defended the conservative liberalism of Burke, Tocqueville, Montalembert, Burckhardt, Acton, and the American Founders (whom he helped introduce to the German-speaking world). He argued doggedly against "democratism," the idea that majorities are always right, because he believed that democracy was the characteristically modern form of political idolatry, based on a flattery of fallen human nature. In addition, although he was a fervently orthodox Catholic, Erik had great respect for Martin Luther, whom he considered a religious genius. And he was always proud of the Hapsburg opposition to anti-Semitism. One wonders whether, had there been more European Catholic aristocrats with his real nobility, the old order might have survived.

Yet I think that Erik, standing now beyond such narrow social considerations, would tell us what we ought to know already: history is not the ultimate theater of justice or salvation. There is a world elsewhere. It is that world to which Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn bore eloquent and faithful witness, especially as he helped us understand what happens when, in this world, it is forgotten.

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While We're At It

■There are deeper things at work in the dispute over Edmund Morris' "biography" of Ronald Reagan, *Dutch* (Random House). Those who despise Reagan and think he is not deserving of a real biography, or fear that an honest biography might expose their

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cherished prejudices, are undisturbed by the way Morris inserts his fictionalized self and other inventions into the story. For instance, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, a daily reviewer for the *New York Times*, writes: "One might of course dismiss Mr. Morris' technique as committing the fallacy of imitative form, matching an artificial narrative with an inauthentic subject. But some would argue that Mr. Reagan's rise to fame was the contradiction of that fallacy." One might parse that tangled language in several ways, but I take it Mr. Lehmann-Haupt is saying that an inauthentic life deserves a dishonest narrative. But he has a more comprehensive point: "So call *Dutch* a literary work instead of a biography. Besides, all biographies invent their stories, as Jay Parini pointed out recently in his *Robert Frost: A Life*. Why not invent the inventor?" Why not indeed?—there is no truth and the effort to ascertain it is therefore a delusion. Thus are the postmodernist vapors from the fever swamps of the academy conveyed by pop-intellects into the general culture.

■Come again? The Park Ridge Center in Chicago is affiliated with the Advocate Health Care System which is, in turn, affiliated with the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This from the Center's *Bulletin*: "With a grant from A Better World Foundation, the Park Ridge Center will cooperate with a group of internationally recognized scholars in a project called Religion Counts, an independent initiative jointly managed by the Park Ridge Center and Catholics for a Free Choice." The article goes on to say that, since the Center does not engage in advocacy, its role will be limited to the research component of the project. The research is to show how religion "can contribute to public policy on population, development, and reproductive health." For the record, A Better World Foundation is a big time funder of pro-abortion advocacy and population control. Catholics for a Free Choice is an institutionalized lie, beginning with its name. Its sole purpose, funded by major anti-Catholic foundations, is to traduce and counter the contribution of the Catholic Church "to public policy on population, development, and reproductive health." The fact is that the Park Ridge Center is engaged in the advocacy of radical pro-abortion and anti-Catholic politics, and its disingenuous effort to deny that fact is pitiable.

■Whatever happened to the underclass? It is no longer a hot subject in public discussions. More than ten years ago, Charles Murray wrote about "The Coming of Custodial Democracy." In a new study, *The Underclass Revisited*, he suggests that what has happened to the underclass is that custodial democracy has been further entrenched. The poor and their problems are still there, but they are more or less successfully contained by policies that prevent their intruding upon the lives of the rest of us. The same policies, Murray contends, exacerbate the problems that isolate the poor. His conclusion: "Though we will continue to live in the geographic location that became America, at some point we must accept that we are no longer living the idea that became America." Readers who resist accepting that can obtain a copy of *The Underclass Revisited* for $9.95 from the American Enterprise Institute, 1150 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

■We are polluted in our determination to resist pollution, and I don't know the way out of this dilemma. The thought came to mind in going through the catalogues of university presses and noting the increase in the number of books on the Marquis de Sade. The thought also came frequently to mind this past year and a half in thinking about the sordid soap opera that is the Clinton presidency. Who would have thought that our public discourse, such as it is, would include semen-stained dresses, the fine points of fellatio, and pornographer Larry Flynt holding forth on talk shows about the state of the American soul? By merely mentioning the degradation, everything is degraded. A couple of years ago Roger Shattuck of Boston University published *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*, in which he exposed and condemned what can only be described as the evil of the Marquis de Sade. He noted that Michel Foucault at the height of his influence celebrated Sade and sadism as the reconversion of the West to "the limitless presumption of appetite," pointing the way toward "surpassing reason through violence." Acclaimed critic Roland Barthes, taking a different tack, treated Sade's writings as mere "texts"—word games and semiotic play. Shattuck writes, "Amid the shrieks and flowing blood of the most horrible scenes, we might just be playing Scrabble." Commenting on these developments, Shattuck says, "Simone de Beauvoir asked, 'Must we burn Sade?' The answer is no. He deserves his corner, like the teratology collection in a medical school. But let us not glorify and celebrate his advocacy of a debauched aristocracy exploiting and torturing the rest of us with impunity. We have enough commercialized sexual violence without this vicious evangelist. I don't believe we want our grandchildren to be reading Sade along with Austen, Dickens, Tolstoy, and Willa Cather—and perhaps instead of them. Some literary revivals defile us more

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than they enlighten us." One agrees with that conclusion while wondering whether Shattuck too wonders whether he has not, however inadvertently, contributed to the defilement. *Forbidden Knowledge* has made it more academically respectable to read and discuss Sade, even as those who write the books and teach the courses may agree that Sade's writings are comparable to the monstrosity collection in a medical school. Who are the elite who can safely be given a key to the teratology room? Not so long ago, libraries kept some books in a locked cage. One might even entertain the suspicion that the answer to Simone de Beauvoir's question is not quite so self-evident as Roger Shattuck suggests.

■Sometimes it seems that Americans are pretty traditional after all. The *Public Perspective*, a review of public opinions and polling released by the Roper Center, recently surveyed Americans on their habits and opinions on a whole host of things, from beachwear to the new currency. The results are not what you might expect. The report found that in 1998 a full 39 percent of Americans lived in the same city in which they were raised. Forty-two percent follow major league baseball with over sixty-one million Americans attending major league baseball games in 1996. A strong majority favor dress codes (59 percent) and uniforms (64 percent) in schools, well over half have pets, 94 percent think people should stand during the singing of the national anthem and 93 percent report feeling "emotional" when they hear it. Of course, not all the news is good news. Half of Americans admit to watching up to two hours of TV a day, and as many as 16 percent watch five or more hours a day, all the while admitting that it's a bad influence on kids (53 percent). Astonishingly, a full 60 percent of Americans expect the end of the world within the next century, either by the final Day of Judgment or by other means. Perhaps that's what comes of watching so much TV.

■President Clinton rightly observed that "the First Amendment does not convert our schools into religion-free zones." That was in reference to the Department of Education's 1995 *Guidelines on Religion in the Public Schools*, a handbook to be distributed to every school board in the nation concerning religious freedom and student rights. Robert P. George, Princeton professor and former member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, is not terribly impressed with the DOEd's efforts, or, more accurately, lack thereof. In his statement on several hearings held by the Commission over several months in 1998, Prof. George reports that, while the *Guidelines* have been dutifully distributed, their impact has been almost nil. The Department of Education has made no effort to discover whether the *Guidelines* are being read or implemented in local public schools. And, while the *Guidelines* do inform of the Equal Access Act, which guarantees "Bible clubs" and such the same access to public facilities as other groups, they do not make any substantial contribution or correction to the content of the curriculum, where religion is restricted to the field of history. This seems not to be a case of mere laziness or bureaucratic overload on the part of the Department of Education, Prof. George notes. Rather, it appears to be a lack of commitment or interest in safeguarding the religious rights of students and teachers. In the years since the *Guidelines* were first released, there have been three "summits" held by Secretary of Education Richard Riley, but no attempt to get the *Guidelines* to students or parents and no special training for teachers. In the few places where the *Guidelines* have, in fact, initiated a local discussion of the role of religion in society, dialogue about First Amendment rights has increased mutual respect and understanding within the community—and litigation on religion in the schools has decreased. Otherwise, outright hostility towards religion holds the day, and, in an almost clichéd fashion, a materialist worldview masquerades as "neutrality." The Justice Department, says Prof. George, has taken very little interest in the matter of religious rights in the public schools: no one at the DOJ is in charge of endorsing the Equal Access Act, nor has even a single case been instituted against a school in violation of the Act. He suggests that the DOJ take a look at the state of New York, where complaints of violations of religious civil rights exceed the rest of the nation. He expresses the hope that the *Guidelines* "will go beyond a mere recitation of current law to the presentation of a positive vision of the role of religion and religious views in the curriculum and in the school, a vision that is fully consistent with the First Amendment and recognizes the value and role of religion in our nation." The *Guidelines* are available at www.ed.gov/speeches/08-1995/religion.html.

■I don't want to get into trouble again with readers who, while making it clear that they are not socialists, want it known that they despise capitalism and scold me for what they claim (wrongly) is my unqualified enthusiasm for the market economy. At the risk of rousing their ire once again, I note that eighty-eight countries are rated "Free" by the Freedom House survey on political freedom and civil liberties, and fifty-three countries are "Partly Free." There are 117 electoral democracies round the world, and

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countries that aren't are moving in that direction, notably Nigeria and Indonesia. The *Wall Street Journal*, which issues its own "Index of Economic Freedom" together with the Heritage Foundation, observes: "While the Freedom House findings don't jibe perfectly with ours on economic freedom, there's nevertheless a close correlation. Scholars may differ on which comes first, but the two almost invariably go hand in hand. There's a good reason Cuba and North Korea are at the bottom of both lists." Of course, logically speaking, correlation is not the same thing as cause. But when the correlation is so persistent, people may be forgiven for thinking the connection between political and economic freedom is something more than coincidental.

■Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship approves of John Paul II's appeal that all the world's bishops should visit a prison during the Jubilee Year. But then, so many evangelical Protestants respond favorably to this Pope. As a Southern Baptist official remarked fifteen years ago at the beginning of the pontificate, "You guys sure got a Pope who knows how to pope." In this instance, however, even the *National Catholic Reporter* approves of the Pope's suggestion: "This is the kind of imaginative gesture John Paul has made all too seldom. Too preoccupied with keeping the lid on doctrine and discipline, he failed to use his vast popularity to act rather than react, to enable rather than control. Yet it's never too late." So apparently there is still time for him to learn how to pope. On the other hand, who would have predicted that twenty years of unimaginative repression and reaction would have produced such "vast popularity"?

■Clarke D. Forsythe, writing in *Christianity Today*, makes note of the seemingly bizarre "disconnect" at work in the mind of Middle America today: abortion is evil, but it is necessary. That most Americans consider abortion to be evil is amply supported by the evidence: the 1991 Gallup poll, which is the most complete poll on attitudes toward abortion to date, found that 77 percent of the people believe that abortion is the taking of human life (28 percent) or outright murder (49 percent), and if anything those numbers have increased in the intervening years. At the same time, these Americans, who will favor virtually any policy to dissuade women from abortions, say it is necessary for abortion, at least in some circumstances, to remain legal (60 percent). Forsythe contends that the "necessary" part is based on four myths that have had great public currency since the 1960s. The first myth is that between one and two million abortions occurred annually before abortion was legalized. In fact, the number was in the tens of thousands at most; in 1968, the first year of legalization in California, only five thousand abortions were performed in that state. The second myth is that thousands of women died every year from botched abortions before legalization. According to the the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, in 1972 thirty-nine women died from illegal abortions, only twelve more than the twenty-seven who died from *legal* abortions. The third myth is that pre-*Roe* laws penalized women, when in fact they punished the doctors and considered women the second victims of the abortions. The fourth myth is that abortion has been good for women, but, in Forsythe's summation, "the general impact on health has had many negative consequences, including the physical and psychological toll that many women bear, the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, the general coarsening of male-female relationships over the past thirty years, the threefold increase in the repeat-abortion rate, and the increase in hospitalizations from ectopic pregnancies." In addition to the perdurance of these myths, Forsythe observes that the "choice" rhetoric subtly skews the argument in the minds of many Americans. They have been taught to think of abortion policy only in legal, not moral, terms. In this view, what is legal is moral, even if one deems it immoral. Disconnect is one word for it; incoherence is another. But the great task now is to overcome the myths behind abortion as a "necessary evil." Given sinful human nature, it is inevitable that there will be some abortions, no matter how great the change in law and culture. But inevitability is not necessity. It is never necessary to do evil.

■I have over the years been viewed as a man of the left and a man of the right, and the truth is that I've never put much stake in such labels. But this I have learned: the left patrols its borders and checks membership credentials ever so much more scrupulously, even ruthlessly, than does the right. There is on the right, at least as I have experienced it, nothing like the rigorous rules of political correctness. A conservative who dissents from majority conservative opinion on, say, capital punishment, school vouchers, or sanctions against Cuba is said to be "unsound" on those particular issues but is not drummed out of polite conservative company. Not so on the left. In the late sixties and seventies I dissented on a number of questions, notably on the "anti-Amerika" turn of the movement against the war in Vietnam and, most decisively, on abortion. The rituals of excommunication are immediate and relentless, as brilliantly described in,

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for instance, Norman Podhoretz's *Breaking Ranks*. All this is brought to mind by Alan Wolfe's review in the *New Republic* of Katherine S. Newman's *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City* (Knopf). Wolfe scathingly dissects the ways in which Newman blinds herself with a leftist ideology that prevents her from seeing that the stories she tells about the working poor in Harlem in fact vindicate the 1996 welfare reform that moves people from dependency on the dole to productive employment. Wolfe writes: "Work, in short, acts as something of a wonder drug for which dependency on the state was the disease. This, at least, is one way to read what Newman's actual research demonstrates. For all its leftist asides, *No Shame in My Game* is in some ways a thoroughly conservative book. When a book written from the left praises employers for expanding opportunities and laments military cutbacks for constricting them, it is clear how far from the 1960s we have traveled. And from the 1980s, too. The world described by Newman is one in which black Burger Barn managers will not hire unkempt black teenagers, and Spanish-speaking immigrants, to the resentment of many blacks, grab up as many of the available jobs in Harlem as they can get their hands on. This is not the stuff of the Rainbow Coalition." But now Wolfe senses that he is on dangerous ground. The suspicion is raised, Is Alan Wolfe moving to the right? To ward off that dangerous suspicion, Wolfe ends his long essay by excoriating conservatives who refuse to recognize that there are some good people in real need of public assistance. If welfare reform turns out badly some years from now, we can blame "conservative hostility to the poor. Conservatives treat the poor as Marx once described the lumpenproletariat, as a sack of potatoes in which one is indistinguishable from another." And so forth. As it happens, it was conservatives who pressed, precisely for the sake of the poor, the importance of work over what Wolfe acknowledges as "the disease" of welfare dependency. In the inner cities across our country, it is generally conservatives, acting through religiously based programs, that are reaching out to help those who fall through the cracks of welfare reform. Never mind, Alan Wolfe has assured the readers of *TNR* that he is not breaking ranks. He still despises conservatives. Call off the political correctness patrol.

■ *The Library of Conservative Thought* is edited by Professor Michael Henry of St. John's University, and published by *Transaction*. If there are worthy books that are now out of print—in political philosophy, politics, culture, religion, etc.—and that you think should be included in the series, Prof. Henry is eager for suggestions and can be reached at St. John's University, Humanities, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Jamaica, New York 11439.

■ Snippets of it appeared in reports here and there, but I had not seen the full statement of Judge Jessica Cooper of Oakland County Circuit Court when she sentenced Jack Kevorkian to a term of ten to twenty years and denied him bail while he appeals his conviction. Her statement may be read as a footnote to Robert H. Bork's article "Thomas More for Our Season," in the June/July issue.

> This is a court of law and you said you invited yourself here to take a final stand. But this trial was not an opportunity for a referendum. The law prohibiting euthanasia was specifically reviewed and clarified by the Michigan Supreme Court several years ago in a decision involving your very own cases, sir. So the charge here should come as no surprise to you. You invited yourself to the wrong forum. Well, we are a nation of laws, and we are a nation that tolerates differences of opinion because we have a civilized and a nonviolent way of resolving our conflicts that weighs the law and adheres to the law. We have the means and the methods to protest the laws with which we disagree. You can criticize the law, you can write or lecture about the law, you can speak to the media or petition the voters. But you must always stay within the limits provided by the law. You may not break the law. You may not take the law into your own hands. In point of fact, the issue of assisted suicide was addressed in this state by referendum just last November. And while the proponents of that were out campaigning, you were with Thomas Youk. And the voters of the state of Michigan said "no." And they said no two-and-a-half to one. But we are not talking about assisted suicide here. When you purposely inject another human being with what you know to be a lethal dosage of poison, that, sir, is murder. And the jury so found. Now, you've vilified the jury and the justice system in this case. But every member of that jury had compassion and empathy for Thomas Youk. They had a higher duty that went beyond personal sympathy and emotion. They took an oath to follow the law, not to nullify it. And I am bound by a very similar oath, sir. No one is unmindful of the controversy and emotion that exists over end-of-life issues and pain control. And I assume that the debate will

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> continue in a calm and reasoned forum long after this trial and your activities have faded from public memory. But this trial is not about that controversy. The trial was about you, sir. It was about you and the legal system. And you have ignored and challenged the Legislature and the Supreme Court. And moreover, you've defied your own profession, the medical profession. You stood before this jury and you spoke of your duty as a physician. You repeatedly speak of treating patients to relieve their pain and suffering. You don't have a license to practice medicine. . . . This trial was not about the political or moral correctness of euthanasia. It was all about you, sir. It was about lawlessness. It was about disrespect for a society that exists and flourishes because of the strength of the legal system. . . . So let's talk just a little bit more about you specifically. You were on bond to another judge when you committed this offense, you were not licensed to practice medicine when you committed this offense and you hadn't been licensed for eight years. And you had the audacity to go on national television, show the world what you did, and dare the legal system to stop you. Well, sir, consider yourself stopped.

■"Chutzpah" is sometimes defined as offensive self-confidence, shamelessness, effrontery, or gall. It can be all those things, of course, but such definitions fail to catch the charming ingenuousness of the thing. Here, for instance, is a story in the *Times* under the heading, "Princeton Puzzle: Where Have Jewish Students Gone?" Twenty years ago, 18 percent of Princeton students were Jewish, and that is now down to 10 percent. The question is, according to Karen W. Arenson of the *Times*, "Why do other Ivy League campuses—Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Penn—manage to keep Jewish populations of at least a quarter and in some cases more than a third?" Why indeed is Princeton not maintaining its Jewish quota? The president of Princeton, Harold Shapiro, is Jewish, as are presidents of other Ivy League schools. He says, "If there's something we're doing that consciously or unconsciously discriminates against any religion, then we should stop it, but no one has presented me with any evidence." Ms. Arenson's point, however, is that, whether or not discrimination is involved, Princeton is failing to meet what is presumed to be the norm. Two percent of the American population is Jewish, and Princeton has only five times that ratio among its students, while comparable schools manage to overrepresent Jews by as much as fifteen times. The article says, "Minority enrollment—black, Hispanic, and Asian-American students—is now 27 percent, not markedly different from the general population." So it appears that it is Jews who are being singled out, almost as though they were a minority. Ms. Arenson notes, "Nobody is advocating affirmative action for Jews." Most Jews, being liberal, are supportive of affirmative action for other minorities, which means that they should be represented at least in proportion to their numbers in the general population. Affirmative action for Jews, one gathers from the *Times*, would mean that their proportional representation should be multiplied by fifteen. Explicitly advocating that, however, would be a bit much. Anyway, unlike other minorities, Jews will rely on merit, confident that the result will be their dramatic overrepresentation among the elite. When that result is not dramatic enough, as in the case of Princeton, something is clearly wrong. Ms. Arenson writes, "One answer to those concerned about the number of Jewish students may be an expansion of the student body." Princeton currently takes in about 1,150 freshmen and it is proposed that that be increased by 125 or 150. The implication is that, if such a change is to be responsive to "those concerned about the number of Jewish students," most of these additional students would be Jewish. In the *Times* and elsewhere, the discussion of Princeton's presumed "Jewish problem" pays insufficient attention to the declining number of college-age Jews. Twenty years ago, Jews were nearly 5 percent of all college freshmen in the country, and now they are about 2 percent. That the brightest congregate in a few elite universities may say something positive about the desire of Jewish students to date and marry other Jews. The suggestion that the elite status of an institution such as Princeton is thrown into question because it does not maintain the Jewish quota established by Harvard and others is quite wrongheaded. It is also, as aforesaid, an instance of chutzpah that is not without its charm. Or maybe Ms. Arenson's point—recalling Groucho Marx's mot about rejecting any club that would admit him to membership—is that Princeton is too elite. In any event, we have as a country come a long way when the suspicion of anti-Semitism is raised because an institution has only five times more Jews than their presence in the general population.

■Scholars should welcome the appearance of *Review of Theological Literature*, a new quarterly that excerpts and translates European, mainly German-language, publications appearing in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, which was established by Adolf von Harnack in 1876.

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The coverage is broad, including biblical studies, church history, ethics, and world religions. For subscription information write T&T Clark, 59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LQ, Scotland (fax 0131 220 4260).

■Alan Wolfe has been hired away from Boston University (very nominally Methodist) by Boston College (nominally Catholic) to start an institute on religion and public life. As Chairman Mao said before he chopped them down, let a hundred flowers bloom. Mr. Wolfe has in his long career made no known contribution to the understanding of religion—and, as Gertrude Himmelfarb notes in her new book, *One Nation, Two Cultures*, he has frequently declared his hostility to religion in public—but he writes prolifically on public life as viewed through the prism of liberal politics. His general argument is that Americans are all good liberals, and not too much attention should be paid a few alien ideologues who call themselves conservatives. Recently in the *New Republic* he castigated conservatives for having not "written a serious, original, philosophically fundamental book that would do for conservatism what John Rawls had done for liberalism." This assumes that Rawls' convoluted "justice as fairness" contrived by egoists behind a "veil of ignorance" has been a great boon for liberalism. John Miller and Ramesh Ponnuru of *National Review* ask, "Have conservatives been too busy defending the Great Books from Wolfe's professorial colleagues to write any of their own?" In fact, they note, Wolfe ignores *NR*'s recent list of the hundred best nonfiction books of the twentieth century, many of them written by self-confessed conservatives. They continue: "How could conservatives possibly disprove Wolfe's thesis that modern conservatism is impossible? It isn't enough to write 'thoughtful and persuasive books,' as he concedes James Q. Wilson and Mary Ann Glendon have done, since they aren't architectonic. It isn't enough to win the Cold War. (Conservatives have never 'introduced programs that . . . demonstrate that conservative policies could work on their own terms.') . . . We could privatize the currency, abolish public education and child-labor laws, outlaw abortion, and restore the Tenth Amendment and the gold standard tomorrow, and Wolfe would still say that 'conservatism never emerged as a true governing philosophy in the late twentieth century' and that we're all liberals. Fine. We'll take that deal."

■For years Northern High School in Calvert County, Maryland, had student-led prayer at commencement. Earlier this year the ACLU protested, and the school ruled that the student who wished to pray could call for a silent "time for reflection," but without mentioning God. Come the commencement and the time for reflection, a voice in the crowd intoned "Our Father who art in heaven" and soon at least half the crowd of four thousand was joining in the Lord's Prayer. The ACLU stated, "The real loser here is the Constitution and the right of people to express dissent." I expect that some of the people thought that is exactly what they were doing.

■"If a moral argument is associated with religion, it need not be taken seriously because we know that religion is evil." Most major newspapers would hesitate to publish an opinion piece making that assertion so bluntly. Ben Bova, author of *Immortality* and member of *USA Today*'s board of contributors, advocates in that paper unfettered scientific research to expand the human life span to age two hundred and beyond. "Most of the objections voiced today to research involving human embryos," writes Bova, "appear to be based on religious beliefs, not on socioeconomic considerations. They are the continuation of a struggle that once saw thinkers such as Galileo muzzled and Giordano Bruno burned at the stake because they expressed opinions contrary to the teachings of the Church." Which, being translated, is pretty much the opening statement above, with perhaps the coda that the Catholic religion is most particularly evil. Bova concludes by noting that Hitler and Stalin also wanted to control scientific research. And we know what religious fanatics they were.

■When the Lambeth Conference, the decennial gathering of the Anglican communion, last year overwhelmingly rejected homosexual relations as being incompatible with the historic Christian faith, many Episcopalian bishops in this country made it clear that they would ignore the decision, and that certainly seems to be the case here in New York. In the days prior to the Gay Pride Parade, a homosexual newspaper, *New York Blade*, was distributed door to door in our neighborhood. In addition to glowing stories on male prostitutes and porno stars, along with innumerable classifieds offering or soliciting sundry sexual services, there are advertisements by Episcopal churches, including a large ad by the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine for "A Sacred Celebration" of the thirtieth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, featuring "The Honorable Barney Frank, the New York City Gay Men's Chorus, Lavender Light Gospel Choir, the Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps Band, and other very special

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guests." My mentioning this will likely elicit from Episcopalian readers more complaints that I am too critical of their communion. I sincerely do not wish to be, but surely we have not reached the point where ecumenical respect is defined by pretending not to notice.

■It is true, as an alert reader notes, that the catastrophe in Kosovo has muddled some conventional distinctions between left and right. She sends along an editorial in the *Nation* that asserts "most thoughtful leftists have long known that when it comes to a serious critique of U.S. foreign policy, they have far more in common with elements of the right than they do with the Cold War liberals and their globalist progeny currently running U.S. diplomacy." The editorial quotes Thomas Fleming, paleoconservative editor of *Chronicles*: "We are the evil empire. Our war in Kosovo is the latest chapter in a century of American imperialism that includes Vietnam, the Gulf War, and our shameful, secret wars in Central America." It is not always unambiguously clear that America is, in the words of Lincoln, "the last, best hope of earth," but to claim that it is the evil empire is both repugnant and ridiculous. That is the kind of intemperate wrongheadedness that prompted us to break with the Rockford Institute, the publisher of *Chronicles*, ten years ago. Suffice it to say that Kosovo is part of a new and deeply troubling chapter in which a post-Cold War America, under the most feckless leadership, resorts to bullying and violence in the absence of a clearly articulated policy, never mind an overarching doctrine for the exercise of its power in the world. This, we must hope and resolve, is not a permanent circumstance.

■Some Christians, let it be admitted, are so insecure about their place in the world that they are pitiably grateful when Christianity, or even religion-in-general, gets public notice, even if the notice is trivializing or downright hostile. Thus an evangelical friend thinks James Twitchell's *Lead Us Into Temptation* (Columbia University Press) is important because it "lifts up the religious dimension." So Christians are in the business of marketing "the religious dimension"? A wiser evaluation of Twitchell is offered by Laura Landro, writing in the *Wall Street Journal:* "Throughout, Mr. Twitchell draws parallels between consumerism and religion. Clergymen will no doubt be dismayed—understandably—at such assertions as: 'Whereas the Heavenly Host organized the world of our ancestors, the Marketplace of Objects does it for us; they both promise redemption: one through faith, the other through purchase.' To Mr. Twitchell, 'modern consumerism is not a replacement of religion but a continuation, a secularizing, of a struggle for order. Salvation through consumption is not a contradiction, but a necessity.' It takes a pretty shallow idea of religious belief, and of human spiritual yearning, to write such cant. To put it diplomatically, Mr. Twitchell has seized on a few basic truths about consumerism and gotten completely carried away. But this much may be true: Going out shopping might be more rewarding and fulfilling than reading a book about it."

■I'm not sure what to make of it, but I suspect that there is more than a little merit to Dennis Prager's argument. He is greatly exercised that the dean of Harvard Divinity School, Ronald Thiemann, was asked to resign after it was discovered that he had pornography on his university computer. The Divinity School is not a seminary, notes Prager, and therefore the argument does not wash that more is expected of someone who is in a position of "religious leadership." The feminists who believe pornography is antiwoman, says Prager, would have protested just as strongly against the dean of any other school. He imagines them saying, "How can Harvard allow a man who views women as sexual objects to teach law to our young men and women?" Prager makes this telling point: "If the dean were a homosexual man who had pictures of naked men on his computer, the chances that Harvard would have asked him to resign his position are next to nothing. And if Harvard had asked a gay dean to resign for having private pictures of naked men, charges of homophobia would have engulfed the university." Those demanding Thiemann's resignation, Prager observes, included some who were vocal defenders of President Clinton during the Monica sleaze. "They had argued that society should allow the President of the United States to do whatever he wants sexually so long as it does not adversely affect his work—an argument that is worthy of respect. But how then can they criticize a college dean for his fantasy life? If looking at pictures of naked females alone in one's office fatally compromises a man's ability to be a university dean, why doesn't acting out sexual fantasies in the Oval Office with a real female compromise a man's ability to be President of the United States?" In Prager's view, the moral contradictions and invasion of Thiemann's privacy have only one explanation—"heterophobia—a hostility to heterosexual male sexuality." I do not take as benign a view of pornography as does Mr. Prager, and friends at Harvard say that they suspect that something more than pornography was involved in Thiemann's leaving (although they also say they don't know what

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that might be), but Dennis Prager has given us something worth thinking about.

■I see from their newsletter that the Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics is sponsoring in Philadelphia a conference of "distinguished international scholars" to promote "The Right to Family Planning, Contraception, and Abortion in Ten World Religions." It sounds impressive, but in the long list of participants there is not a name that would be recognized outside the person's immediate family or academic department. Except for Daniel C. Maguire, the former priest and pop-dissident at Marquette University. The bad news is that the Consultation has been granted "special consultative status" as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations, where we can be sure "the distinguished representatives of ten world religions" will contend that their traditions support making access to abortion a right to be enshrined in international law. "We look forward to sharing our views and building coalitions with other progressive-minded NGOs," says Coalition president Maguire. He notes that "other religions and religious NGOs will have to be more vocal in pointing out that the Vatican does not speak for all Catholics. . . . There is more to the Catholic Church than the Catholic hierarchy, which historically tends more often than not to lag behind in the development of Catholic wisdom." Thus spake the galloping infallibility of the progressive-minded.

■The Methodist Church in Britain is considering whether to allow drinking alcoholic beverages at its annual conference. David Deeks, coordinator for church and society, said the issue was last discussed in 1987 and it is time to take it up again. "The majority view then, as now, was that there was scope for responsible individual drinking. I think that this view should now be reflected in the rules governing Methodist churches." Individual drinking? The biblical evidence distinctly suggests that this gift of God is intended for conviviality. Public abstinence joined to individual drinking, one might think, has been too much the pattern in the past among Christians who have a problem with spirits.

■Almost everywhere one goes, there are complaints about the sorry state of preaching. I suppose it has always been thus, and there is really no way to evaluate whether what is going on in the half million pulpits of America is better or worse than, say, a hundred years ago. But attention to good preaching is ever in order, and the most helpful attention is provided by good example. We should therefore be grateful to Doubleday for bringing out *Tongues of Angels, Tongues of Men: A Book of Sermons*, edited by John F. Thornton and Katharine Washburn (796 pp., $30). The list of notables represented here goes on and on: Clement of Rome, Francis of Assisi, the Cure d'Ars, John Donne, Hildegard of Bingen, Savonarola, Meister Eckhart, John Henry Newman, Billy Sunday, Martin Luther King, Jr., Fulton Sheen, Billy Graham, Karl Barth, Jonathan Edwards, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for examples. All the sermons are interesting, although not all should be emulated. The sermons of seventeenth-century John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, were bestsellers at the time. Taking as his text, "Speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2), Tillotson goes on interestingly enough about the sins of gossip and slander, and concludes with this: "I foresee what will be said, because I have heard it so often said in the like case, that there is not a word of Jesus Christ in all this. No more is there in the text. And yet I hope that Jesus Christ is truly preached whenever his will and laws and the duties enjoined by the Christian religion are inculcated upon us." At the risk of speaking ill of Archbishop Tillotson, one can hardly imagine a homiletical formula better designed to guarantee the declension of Christian faith and life. But Tillotson is an exception. Obviously, this is not a book to be read in a sitting, but the 20 percent of our subscribers who are clergy might jump-start their homiletical efforts by regularly imbibing—from this book, that is. Other subscribers, especially those who are subjected to preaching that falls somewhat short of excellence—and it seems possible there are some—might consider making a well-targeted gift of this fine collection.

■James Carroll is back at the stand the *New Yorker* gives him from time to time. The last time we took note, he was hawking dissident German theologian Hans Küng's thesis that the Catholic Church should acknowledge "co-responsibility" with Hitler for the Holocaust. In a subsequent article, he takes up the canonization of Edith Stein in "The Saint and the Holocaust." There is the usual flapdoodle about the Church wanting to "Christianize" the Holocaust, but then comes a novel twist suggesting that Stein was not really a Christian after all. He hones in on the story of a Dutch official who met her on the way to Auschwitz and expressed a willingness to help her because she was baptized. Stein is reported to have said in response, "Why should there be an exception made in the case of a particular group? Wasn't it fair that baptism not be allowed to become an advantage?" The advantage to which she reportedly referred is, of course, an advantage relative to

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Hitler's program of extermination. Her stand of solidarity with other Jews is given this spin by Carroll: "The true epiphany of Edith Stein's story is that, in a visceral rejection of Christian theology, she refused to see the Jews as disadvantaged before God." Had she been a real Christian, Carroll gives his readers to understand, she would have been an anti-Semite.

■All right already, so we've heard enough about why Catholics can't sing. So who is doing something about it? Funny you should ask, for I have just been receiving glowing reports on the work of Father Anthony Ruff at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, who pulled together an international conference on liturgical music last summer and is determined to make it an annual event. He also has ambitious plans for forming a national youth choir, but for that some heavy duty funding is required. This is, I believe, an important apostolate. For more information and to find out how you can help, contact Fr. Ruff at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321, phone (320) 363-3223, or e-mail awruff@csbsju.edu.

■"Ethnic cleansing" takes many forms. In December 1998, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic invited the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to help reduce the population of Kosovo. Milosevic's minister for family concerns described Kosovar women as "baby machines," and indeed they do have a birthrate approximately four times the anemic 1.4 for Serbs, a rate far short of replacement. According to a study by the Virginia-based Population Research Institute, UNFPA responded with a massive program promoting contraception and abortion among Kosovars that continues to this day. The war in the Balkans was justified as "humanitarian intervention" against a policy based on the premise that there are too many Kosovars. The UNFPA, it seems, agrees with the premise, differing with Milosevic on the point of life at which excess population should be reduced.

■A 10 percent increase in abortions is associated with a 1 percent decrease in crime. That, report John Donohue of Stanford and Steven Levitt of the University of Chicago, is because the women who have most abortions—teenagers, the unmarried, and blacks—are more likely to have children who turn out to be criminals. Given the social costs of dealing with crime, they estimate that abortion is saving the U.S. about $30 billion per year through what Ramesh Ponnuru calls "preemptive capital punishment." Jonathan Swift, by way of contrast, was not really serious about his proposal for resolving the Irish problem.

■To paraphrase the title of an old movie, "They kill old people and cripples, don't they?" Mention the Netherlands and that's the question that comes to mind. For decades the Dutch have been in the vanguard of nations allowing euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide. What was previously allowed is now to be formally legalized. A bill proposed to the parliament also allows children aged twelve and over to make their own euthanasia decisions, even against their parents' objections, if a doctor consents. The aptly named Dr. Ben Crul of the Royal Dutch Medical Association supports the measure, noting that children with terminal illnesses are "a lot more grown-up than many adults." An official of the Justice Ministry says it's a matter of consistency, since teenagers can already get contraceptive devices and abortions without their parents' consent. It makes a kind of sense. Why shouldn't those who have a right to kill also have a right to be killed? The culture of consistency, also known as the culture of death.

■The PBS showing of *John Paul II: The Millennial Pope* has come and gone, and on balance one must count it a plus. When producer Helen Whitney came to discuss the project several years ago, I was not at all sure what she was up to. I'm still not entirely sure, but I suspect she may be one crafty lady. It is true, for the talking heads in the two-and-a-half-hour program she rounded up the usual suspects—James Carroll, Hans Küng, et al.—to do their Pope-bashing routine, and the repeated theme was that of a Pope at war with modernity. But the actual footage from John Paul's life and pontificate overwhelmed the standard silliness. And Ms. Whitney, in order to explain the Pope's thinking on abortion, even sneaked in a substantial piece of Bernard Nathanson's *Silent Scream*, the famous filming of the unborn child in the womb. Imagine, *Silent Scream* on PBS. The program's treatment of Latin America and liberation theology was badly skewed. On that and many other questions, those who are looking for the inside story will want to read George Weigel's splendid biography of John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*. Yet Helen Whitney and her colleagues did a remarkable job in supplying so much on the man and the pontificate that would be new to all but a few viewers. Moreover, the final word was given to Roberto Suro of the *Washington Post* who expressed the fashionable reservations about John Paul but then ended with another thought: "On the other hand, you have to ask, is he a prophet? Did he come here with a message? Did he see something that many of us are missing? In that case, the tragedy

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is ours." I don't know what other viewers made of the program. Study after study suggests that television does not so much change minds as reinforce what people already think. We see what we want to see. Making allowances for that, I am inclined to the view that, whatever she thought she was doing, Helen Whitney smuggled a powerful message through the hostile territory that is PBS.

■I've been having this little back-and-forth with the editors of the Houston *Catholic Worker*, who allege that I misrepresent Catholic social teaching on the market economy. They were most particularly exercised by my book *Appointment in Rome: The Church in America Awakening*. Their latest issue carries the headline, "Fr. Neuhaus Refuses to Recant." It sounds like 1521 all over again—"Here I stand" and all that. Except in this instance the Pope praises the book while the Houston editors, who in my judgment misunderstand the Church's teaching, demand a recantation. They assert that I choose to "continue with a hard heart." I pray that is not the case. With a head as clear as it's ever likely to get, I simply disagree with the editors. The problem with a quarrel, observed the great GKC, is that it interrupts a good argument. Catholic social doctrine is eminently worth arguing about.

■What a beautiful brouhaha. The Brooklyn Museum of Art scheduled a British show called "Sensation" and featuring, among other items designed to shock, carved-up animals floating in a tank of formaldehyde and the bust of a man made from his own frozen blood. Most attention was fixed on *The Holy Virgin Mary*, a painting by a young man by the name of Chris Ofili, which has clumps of elephant dung pasted on Mary and a background of bottoms and genitalia cut out of pornographic magazines. The papers played up Catholic protests against the exhibit, almost as though other Christians worship a Lord born of a different mother. But things really heated up when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said taxpayers shouldn't pay for blasphemous schlock and threatened to cut off city funds for the Museum. The usual alarums about artistic freedom were raised, although from some surprising corners the point was made that nobody should be surprised if shock art elicits the reaction of shock politics. Hillary Clinton, who is presumably running against Giuliani for U.S. Senate, criticized the mayor's threat to cut funds, but indicated that she was personally opposed to the porno and dung depiction of the Blessed Virgin. She said she would not go to see the show. Other museum directors in the city were strangely subdued because, it was said, they feared for their own city funding or, as others said, because they realized that the Brooklyn Museum had recklessly gone one outrage too far. Art critics at the *Times*, not surprisingly, defended the exhibit. It was repeatedly noted that Ofili is a Catholic and therefore the painting cannot be anti-Catholic. In addition, he is of African background and in some parts of Africa, or so they claimed, elephant dung is a symbol of fertility, and Ofili has also used it on other paintings. They did not claim that there is a distinctively African symbolic understanding of pornography. Carol Vogel of the *Times* tried to set straight opponents of the show: "While news reports have described his paintings as being splattered with dung, the clumps are actually carefully placed on each canvas." So there. Carefully placed dung is an entirely different matter. Back in London, Ofili says he is mystified by the controversy over the painting. "There's something incredibly simple but incredibly basic about it. It attracts a multiple of meanings and interpretations," he said. Incredible is the word. He is currently working on a painting called "Magic Monkey" that tries "to capture the three powerful elements of life: sex, money, and drugs." These are represented by separate (and carefully placed) clumps of elephant dung and colored tops that he buys at the grocery store. Ofili's paintings are selling briskly. One went for $36,000 last year, and it is expected that prices will soar as a result of the current row. Says noted collector Dean Valentine, "Of all the young British painters I think he's by far the best. The paintings have a depth of expression. He has something to say." This is artistic self-parody and political soap opera of rare quality. From Paris 1914 and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* to dung art in Brooklyn, one may be permitted to hope that this is the way a misguided inspiration ends, with a political bang and an artistic whimper.

■A rabbi friend observes that some Jews now have two slogans, "Never again!" and "Never enough!" The latter comes into notable play when the subject is the acknowledgment of Christian, and specifically Catholic, responsibility relative to the Holocaust. In "Contrition in the Age of Spin Control" (FT, November 1997), Mary Ann Glendon wrote in support of John Paul II's call for Catholics to prepare for the new millennium by honestly examining the events of history and, when the evidence warrants it, confessing their failures. At the same time, Professor Glendon was concerned that some critics would never be satisfied "until Catholics apologize themselves into nonexistence." That concern is reinforced by Robert S. Wistrich's "The Pope, the Church, and the Jews," in the April

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issue of *Commentary*. While the author's language is generally restrained, the substance of his essay is an attack on Pius XII that gives every benefit of the doubt to the charges of less restrained critics of that much maligned Pope. The July/August issue of *Commentary* carries letters mainly in defense of Pius XII, some more persuasive than others. Particularly to the point is Eugene Fisher's response to Wistrich's criticism of the Holy See's 1998 statement on the Holocaust. Fisher heads the office of interreligious affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and he writes: "Finally, Mr. Wistrich argues that *We Remember* endorses the view 'that the Church as an institution was blameless during the Shoah.' This is to misread a theological distinction. The document does distinguish between the Church as a human institution, on the one hand, and the Church as a sacramental, transcendent reality, 'the Mystical Body of Christ,' on the other. This is a classical Catholic distinction not found in Protestantism. It is the latter theological reality that the document quite understandably holds 'blameless' from the sins of the Church's human members. But the Church as a human institution, the document teaches, can and must be held accountable for the sins of omission and commission of its members over the centuries and during the Shoah." Mr. Wistrich writes in response: "I was referring to the disheartening prospect that the Vatican's final position on the Church's 'errors and failures' would be to hold ordinary Christians responsible while maintaining that the institution itself was blameless. I now realize from Mr. Fisher's theological distinction between the Church as 'the Mystical Body of Christ' and as a human institution that it is exactly as I feared." This is obtuse and, in light of Mr. Wistrich's obvious intelligence, it is hard to think it is not willfully obtuse. The "members" of the Church referred to by Mr. Fisher obviously includes not only "ordinary Christians" but priests, bishops, cardinals, and, yes, popes. In Catholic teaching, the "sacramental, transcendent reality" of the Church is not exhausted by its members; the Church is more than her earthly members. The Church is sinless because she is the mystical body of the sinless Christ whose foremost member is the sinless Virgin Mary, joined by all the saints in glory; into which company we ordinary mortals are incorporated by the grace of God and called to emulate their holiness. Mr. Wistrich apparently thinks that Catholics should not believe what they do believe about the nature of the Church. Or else he simply thinks it not worth the bother to try to understand what the Church teaches. In either case, Mr. Fisher's correction is not "exactly what [Mr. Wistrich] feared." His misrepresentation of what Mr. Fisher wrote is in the service of exactly what he chooses to believe. Which is a serious disservice to the truth, and to better understanding between Christians and Jews.

■Readers will remember William L. Saunders' gripping account of the genocide being perpetrated in Sudan ("Christmas in Sudan," May 1999). As is typically the case in such circumstances, religious leaders worry about whether overt protest against an oppressive government will make things better or worse. But the Catholic bishops of Eastern Africa (including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) have now concluded that they have no choice but to try to rally world opinion against the atrocities committed by the Islamic government in Khartoum. Addressing the secretary general of the UN and other world leaders, they declare: "The Civil War in the Sudan has assumed savage, fratricidal, and genocidal dimensions for the last sixteen years. We came to know that it has claimed almost two million lives, most of them of innocent civilians. It has caused the displacement of over four million persons, many of whom are refugees within our Region. Furthermore the prolonged instabilities of the Sudan have affected the neighboring countries." The bishops understandably downplay the religious dimensions of the conflict, but it has been amply documented by human rights groups that the militant ("Islamist") regime has been using coercion on a massive scale, including slavery, to "convert" the Christian and animist population of the South to Islam. At the same time, and throwing doubt on the UN's capacity or willingness to help, Christian Solidarity International, which has been active in redeeming captives from slavery, has had its NGO status sharply curtailed, and that upon the insistence of Sudan. You're possibly not in the habit of writing your Congressman or Senator, but this is a time to do so. Maybe with nothing more than, "What are you doing about the religious persecution by the government of Sudan?" That way your representative cannot say that nobody cares.

■Subscribers wonder, sometimes with a note of irritation, why they get mailings inviting them to subscribe. The answer is that the computerized "purge" command is supposed to eliminate the names of present subscribers from lists used for mailings, but a difference of even one digit or letter in the name or address makes the dumb computer "think" this is an entirely different person. I'm told there's not much to be done about that until

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computers get smarter. Solution: Pass the invitation on to a smart friend.

■A friend in Rome notes that *L'Osservatore Romano* refers to me as "direttore della rivista 'First Tidings.'" Since *Webster's* first definition of tidings is "pieces of news," he thinks the editors may read only The Public Square. On second thought, he suggests that, as in "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," they have in mind "tidings of comfort and joy." I can live with either.

■Conventional wisdom has it that secularization of the United States is not nearly so deep or entrenched as it is in Western Europe, especially in Great Britain. It was once thought that a feature of "American exceptionalism" was its resistance to the secular forces rampant in Europe; now it is more accurate to speak of "European exceptionalism" from the religious revival underway in the rest of the world. Still, the case can be made that there is a more visible and articulate Christian culture in public life in Western Europe than in the United States. Try, for instance, to imagine the following, which ran on the front page of the London *Times* last December, appearing in any major U.S. newspaper.

> "Then cometh the end . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:24).
>
> The turning of the year for the Christian church is not New Year but Advent. This year Advent Sunday has a more than usual resonance, for it ushers in the last full cycle of the Christian festivals on the way towards the year 2000.
>
> More and more the commerical cacophony of Christmas preparation has meant that the only Advent themes which have survived are those which look forward to the celebration of the birth of Christ. But there are other and starker Advent themes—the end of time, the Day of Judgment, the Christian longing for the Second Coming of Christ—a tension between the "already" and the "not yet," the urgent notes to "watch" and "wake up," and prayer that God will not delay. The Lord's Prayer itself is an urgent Advent prayer. O come, O come Emmanuel! The great medieval antiphons of Advent with their longing, opening "O" embody the thirsting of all being for God's fulfillment and deliverance, what St. Paul called the "groaning and travailing" of creation. There is a longing for an End that makes sense of it all.
>
> Human beings are made for ends. Only at the end of lives can obituaries be written, and the whole life seen in some kind of perspective. "It sufficeth," said Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar*, "that the day will end and then the end is known." And when the End is known there is a judgment on what life is about, and what it is to be human.
>
> Unlike the wheel of life of some Eastern traditions, the linear sense of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures gives time a significance and history a meaning.
>
> The very first verse of Genesis speaks of a beginning, a shaping moment of creation. The Bible ends with a vision of a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth. At the center of that new creation is set the lamb of sacrifice. There at the heart of God's life is the face of Christ in whose life Christians believe God emptied Himself, identifying completely with His creation, redeeming all time, so that every human life might find there a grace which gives meaning and purpose.
>
> When the Christian Church speaks in language of Messianic expectation of the Christ who will come again in glory, the faith proclaimed is not primarily concerned with describing a descent of Christ from Heaven like an astronaut returning to Earth after a time in space. What it affirms is that there will be a final triumph of the love made known in Christ.
>
> That is the horizon of history and the End for which Christians long. The scarecrow king enthroned in love on the cross is the king who at the end will establish his domain of justice, love, and peace. The God who judges is the God whose love goes to the uttermost. As St. John put it, "at the end He will examine thee in love," pointing to both the criterion and the character of judgment. Advent gathers hopes and longings and focuses them on Christ, from whose self-giving love all things owe their origin, and who is Omega, the End as well as the Beginning.

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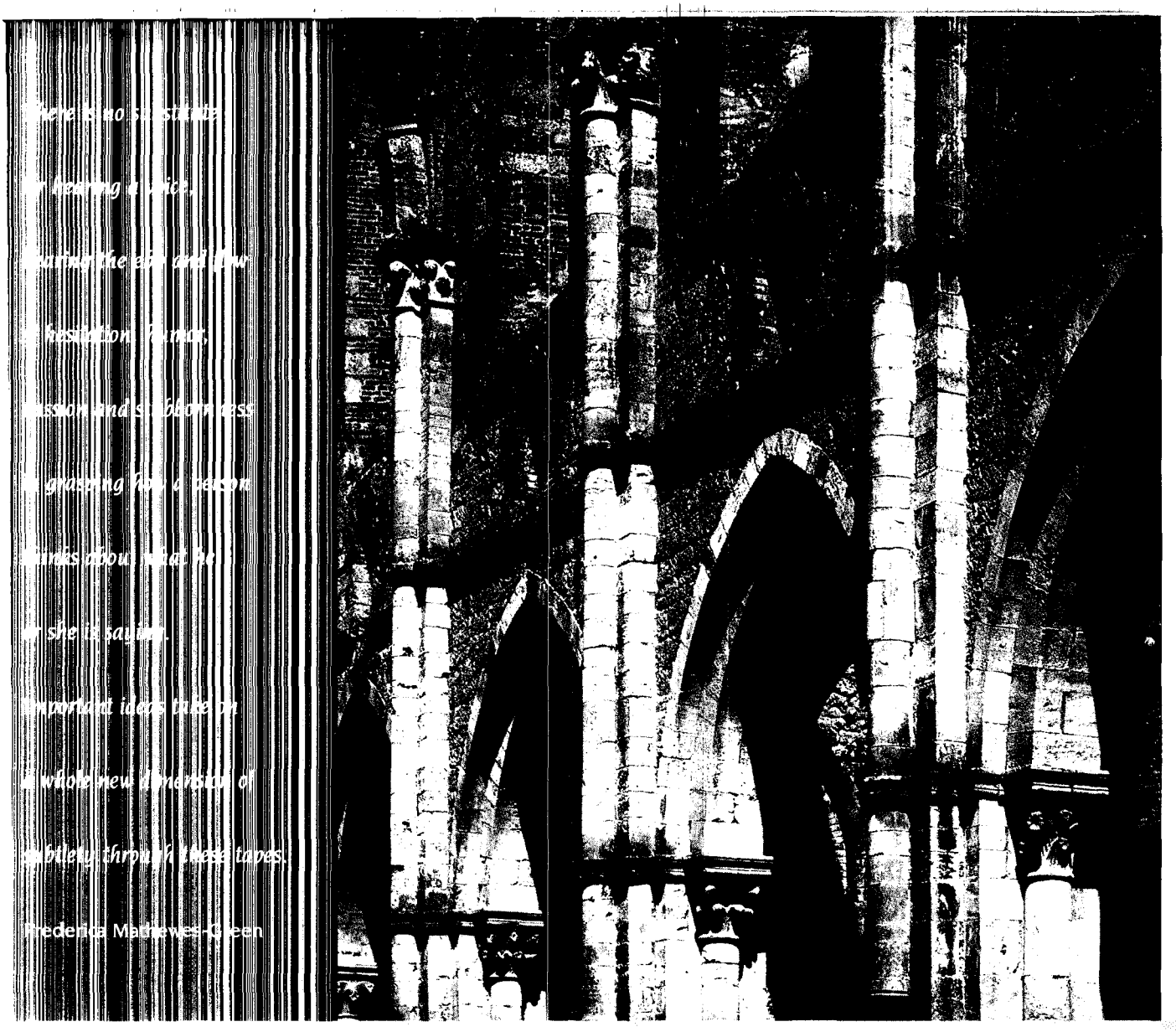

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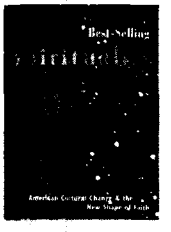

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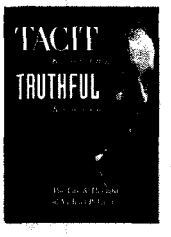

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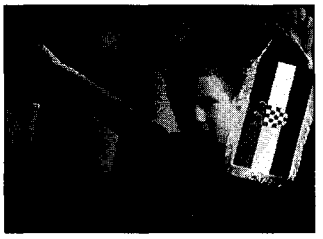

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